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ST NINIAN LECTURES

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RELIGION AND THE MODERN MIND

LECTURES DELIVERED BEFORE THE
GLASGOW UNIVERSITY SOCIETY OF ST NINIAN

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY

DONALD MACALISTER, M.A., M.D., D.C.L., LL.D.
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INTRODUCTION

In Glasgow, as in other Universities, students have long been accustomed to form themselves into societies for the common study of special subjects, or for the promotion of special ends. The Dialectic, Philosophical, Theological, Historical, Physical, and other Societies exist mainly for discussion; the Missionary, Temperance, University Settlement, Christian Union, and several Church Societies, have in view co-operative effort of a practical kind. In the aggregate these Societies cover well the wide field of student interest and activity. Not a few concern themselves only with particular departments of ethical or religious speculation, learning, or practice; just as others devote all their attention to science or letters, though their members may of course be individually interested in various aspects of religion. To counteract a certain tendency to segregation

between the two groups, it appeared to some earnest undergraduates, among whom I would here mention Mr W. L. Marsh, that there was need for still another discussion society, which should be neither sectional nor exclusive in its treatment of religion. Such a society might become a meeting-point for all students, whatever their academic faculty or their attitude to current beliefs and organisations, who desired to investigate with candour modern problems of religious faith and duty. The project approved itself to many, and the Society of St Ninian was founded. It was named after the great religious teacher who, in the third century, redeemed the south-west of Scotland from pagan ignorance.

As the precise statement of a problem is the first step to its solution, the new Society adopted a method of its own to secure that its discussions should not be mere beating of the air. It chose first certain cardinal questions for study during the session. On these it invited men of repute for character and learning to deliver public addresses, each from his special point of view. Then after sufficient interval for reflection, the questions thus

formulated by the experts were handled in free debate at meetings of the students themselves.

This volume contains most of the public addresses with which the Society was favoured. Their range, variety, and interest, the eminence of their authors, and the remarkable stimulation of thought and enquiry they induced in their hearers, make it unnecessary for me to do more than express, on behalf of the Society and the University, our gratitude for the privilege of offering them to a larger audience. They will speak for themselves to all who realise, with the eloquent preacher who gave the inaugural discourse, that in the quest of the highest knowledge "men need patience, fidelity to their ignorance, freedom from pride and prejudice, sacrificial love of truth, the spirit of adventure, and the spirit of reverence."

DONALD MACALISTER.

THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW, 1908.

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PREFATORY NOTE

The Glasgow University Society of St Ninian was founded in 1907. In Principal MacAlister's Introduction will be found a statement of the objects of the Society and the success that attended its efforts.

Some of the members may perceive, in the present arrangement of the lectures, a lack of that unity and continuity which characterised the original syllabus; but the omissions have been inevitable, mainly because of publishers' rights.

Those who are interested will find, at the end of the book, the complete syllabuses for last session and the coming one.

The book has been seen through the Press, and the Index prepared, by Mr R. T. Clark, Secretary of the Society.

W. L. Marsh
President.

CONTENTS

PAGE

INTRODUCTION v

PRINCIPAL DONALD MACALISTER, M.D., D.C.L., LL.D., ETC., GLASGOW.

THE RELIGIONIST AND THE SCIENTIST . . 1

REV. G. A. JOHNSTON ROSS, M.A., CAMBRIDGE.

SCIENCE AND RELIGION 19

REV. FATHER W. J. CROFTON, S.J., M.A., GLASGOW.

COMPARATIVE HIEROLOGY AND THE CLAIMS OF REVELATION 37

JOHN M. ROBERTSON, ESQ., M.P., LONDON.

COMPARATIVE RELIGION AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH 61

REV. CANON J. A. MACCULLOCH, PORTREE.

COMPARATIVE RELIGION AND THE RELIGION OF JESUS 99

REV. P. A. GORDON CLARK, PERTH.

PAGE

THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY AND UNDIVIDED TRINITY 135

REV. PROFESSOR COOPER, D.D., GLASGOW.

THE DIVINITY OF JESUS 159

REV. DAVID SMITH, M.A., D.D., BLAIRGOWRIE.

THE ANSWER OF IDEALISM TO AGNOSTICISM . 183

REV. JAMES ROBERTSON CAMERON, M.A., GLASGOW.

AGNOSTICISM IN DOGMA, METHOD, AND LIFE . 215

REV. P. CARNEGIE SIMPSON, M.A., GLASGOW.

THE TRUE RATIONALISM 235

REV. FATHER M. POWER, S.J., B.A., EDINBURGH.

INDICES 281

THE RELIGIONIST AND THE SCIENTIST, by the Rev. G. A. JOHNSTON ROSS, M.A., Cambridge.

THE RELIGIONIST AND THE SCIENTIST

The task of defining the relations of science and religion, and of attempting to draw the lines of their reconciliation should be undertaken only by men who know both science and religion, and know each by the methods and kind of knowledge appropriate to each: science by patient and first-hand investigation of phenomena, and religion by intimate self-disciplined experience of its power.

No such position would I for a moment dare or consent to occupy; I speak only as a Christian minister, whose ministry proceeds upon a certain conception of the relation between the religionist and the scientist. I shall try to state simply what that conception is: beyond personal testimony I cannot go.

I conceive, then, of my relation as a Christian minister to my brother the student and exponent of science under four aspects:—

I. Independence.—I think the fundamental feeling I have about the work of my fellow-student whose field is science is this: that if he has his mass of facts and realities to deal with, to rationalise

and explain, so, emphatically, have I as a religionist, mine. There are certain popular conceptions which broadly and roughly distinguish the two spheres. The scientist's facts are "external": mine internal. The scientist's facts are "natural": mine moral. He speaks of his facts in the language of mechanism: I of mine in the language of freedom. He deals with courses and sequences of phenomena: I with origins, purpose, and destiny. I do not claim that the two spheres are unrelated, nor assert that they do not interpenetrate one another. I believe, on the contrary, that we are only at the beginning of the science of their mutual interpenetration.

But I do claim that my facts are at least as real as the scientist's facts: that is (to borrow a clever illustration), if the scientific man says, "This room was swept with a broom," I as religionist am saying as real a thing when I say, "This room was swept with a purpose"; or again, that if a man commits a murder, his guilty conscience is as real as the corpse of the person he has murdered.

Further, if the scientist has any reason to believe that the mass of facts with which he deals, and which he sees about him in an alluring disorder, are really, behind all, an ordered cosmos,—I also have as good reason to believe that my world of moral facts is (if only I could arrive at it),

behind all, an ordered cosmos, which it is my business to try to reach.

You may try to bewilder me by questions as to the validity of knowledge, and the nature of reality, and the absurdities of dualism; but to the idea that the scientist is dealing with things more real than I, I will yield, no, not for an hour.

"We are coming," someone has said, "to see increasingly the value and the claim of the *primâ facie* view of life"; and that *primâ facie* view shows me that the materials of religion are real, as real as the stuff of which the world is made. The student of nature comes close to them, yet the most real of them all he never, *quâ* student of nature, quite touches; yet they are there, dislocating or repairing our life. I am a religious man, because the facts are there: I am a religious *agent*, because they press on me with a pressure which I interpret as a vocation specially to deal with them: I am a *Christian* religious agent, because Christianity deals so adequately, so drastically with them, with such a volume of intellectual and moral power.

II. Comradeship.—But now let me hasten to supplement this view of the two spheres as distinct by the conception of comradeship. I lift my eyes from my study of the facts of religion, those facts whose reality I have been claiming, and

I look over to my friend who is studying the phenomena of nature, and mentally say we are comrades.

(1) *Comrades in Work.*—I think of us both as working at an unfinished problem: he on his section, I on mine. I do not hope that either he or I will live in this world to see the work finished. I believe there will be a finish, a solution of "the riddle of this painful earth," and that the examination of nature and the study of spirit will both come home and attain a harmonious unity in that day of completion. Misunderstandings will then be impossible, but meanwhile as incidents of progress they are almost inevitable; for each, the scientist and the religionist, sees, when he looks across at the other, only unfinished work, and he may not know how very unfinished it is. But it needs just the recollection of the fact that the work is unfinished to dispel the misunderstanding and replace it by patient comradeship.

I lay stress on this, because I cannot but feel that here the religionist has often been sadly deserving of blame. He has not been frank enough about the unfinished character of his work. He has been tempted to regard religion and the explanation of moral phenomena as a completed thing, an ordered, rounded system of thought, needing only to be announced and illustrated. He is learning more slowly than the

scientist to discard *à priori* theories, and go to school to the facts and proceed cautiously to generalisations.

And this forgetfulness of the fact that, while experience grows, and ever larger and fuller bodies of experience are coming into view, theology can never be anything but an unfinished and progressive science—this has made the religionist sometimes imperious, and lordly, and impatient, and dogmatic. And the scientist too, in the earlier stages of *his* attendance at the school of experience, showed sometimes that he had, unhappily, caught the trick of dogmatism and of the arrogance of the man who makes haste to regard his work as finished.

The danger is, I think, less to-day than it has ever been. Before the religionist no less than before the scientist new areas of fact and experience are opening up, with regard to which the student has to orientate himself; and where the vastness of these areas is most appreciated, there a modest sense of being but a beginner makes directly toward a sense of kindly collaboration with beginners in other vast fields of research. And this comradeship in work gives also the sense of

(2) *Comradeship in Discipline.*—Both of us (the student of religion and the student of science) can see that we are simultaneously being taught humility and patience by many failures, and the

foolishness of intellectual pride by the supersession and superannuation of much that once was counted vital and final. Both of us are simultaneously being educated in the school of awe and wonder at the vastness and complexity of the universe: both of us feel on our brows the breath of a morning of high hope; for the more we know of the universe, the more numerous become the suggestions of order, and the more excitingly near do we seem to come to a satisfactory demonstration that the whole system is one rational unity.

Subjected, then, to one common discipline, yet sustained by one common hope, we may well look across at one another, not with hostility or fear, but with the level, earnest eyes of mutual respect and of the expectation of useful suggestion.

But there is more than comradeship: on the religionist's side there is profound and far-reaching

III. Debtorship.—The religionist of to-day is deep in the debt of his brethren the students of science. Theological readjustment—changes for the better in the presentation of religion—owe far more to natural science than they do either to philosophy or criticism.

I have neither the space nor the ability to enumerate all the items of that debt; but I should like to mention three ways in which the scientist's emphasis on the uniformity of nature has reacted advantageously on the religious mind of to-day. I

remind myself of these three items of my debt by three words that represent three new emphases in religion: *Unity*, *Law*, *Progress*.

(1) *Unity*.—Lord Morley says somewhere that "unseen and thin as fine filaments of air are the threads that draw opinion to opinion": and in many ways the scientist's emphasis on uniformity will be found to account for the frequency with which the word "unity" is now heard on the theologian's lips.

The theologian has begun, for instance, to think once more, and fruitfully, on a subject which had been thought empty and dessicated like one of Euclid's axioms, viz. the unity of God.

Let me put in Dr Gwatkin's words the link between science and this truth of religion:—

"What we mean by saying that the physical universe is governed by general laws is that knowledge is impossible unless the whole system is at least a rational unity whatever else it may be. And this means that if force be its moving power, there must be one force and no more: and if God, there must be one God and no more."

It is to that last sentence I desire to draw your attention. Science has proclaimed aloud its monodynamism: theology has overheard, and has been startled into a new understanding of its own monotheism.

And there was nothing that theology needed more than this new emphasis on the truth that there is only one God, only one source of truth, only one source of goodness, only one source of life.

For there would seem to have descended from past ages an inveterate provincialism in the theological mind.

Theology has been content to be departmental, notoriously, in its view of the sphere and method of the working of God. The whole conception of God was impoverished and withered by ecclesiasticism; and regions of His working, where the theologian should have bowed in reverence before the sacraments of God's patient direction of men, were passed coldly by as secular, and outside the Divine pale. God's universe was thus made a house divided against itself, and monotheism emptied of much of its power and value.

Happily, now, owing to the emphasis laid by science on the unity in things visible, we have gained a conception of God's working that is at once wider, more comprehensive, and more thorough and intimate. A God who is an absentee from any part of the universe, who hates, despises, or forgets anything that He has made, is now an impossibility for theology: we have been rebuked by science, not for introducing the idea of God at all, but for being unfaithful to our

monotheism, and for not introducing Him far enough, and for not thinking with sufficient definiteness of His presence and agency as universal.

And with this new emphasis on the unity of God has come also, through the gospel of science, a new sense of the unity and solidarity of the human race—a truth without which, as Mazzini said, there is no religion.

I must not attempt to detain you by trying to set forth the ways in which this new emphasis on the oneness of humanity has reacted on the thought of our time; but the least observant amongst us must have noticed how, under its pressure, false, artificial, and mischievous distinctions in place and privilege amongst the individuals and races of the earth (distinctions which an over-confident thought in earlier generations traced even up to the eternal councils of God) have been driven into obscurity, and how the newer conception of man, and of the unity of his life, has made for kindlier international relationships, saner and more intelligent views of the responsibility for Christian missions, wider appreciation of the value and responsibilities of grouped lives, and especially (that which so ministers to-day to hope in the sphere of theology) an expectant and docile observation of developments of thought and life in the Far East.

These are some of the ways in which the scientific emphasis on unity has reacted on the theological mind. Take another item of debt:

(2) *Law.*—The emphasis upon law may almost be called the *differentia* of science, as the emphasis on freedom is the *differentia* of religion.

Religion, dealing with moral acts and their consequences, has staked, and rightly staked, her whole existence on the possibility of forgiveness and repair.

Science, dealing with facts and consequences in the natural sphere, has necessarily emphasised retribution.

Now, I am not going to be so foolish as to attempt a harmonisation of these two voices (I am here, as I said, to testify and not to expound). And my testimony is this, that at least in evangelical circles the popular conception of forgiveness sadly needed the counter-emphasis of science on retribution and the inviolability of law. Mark you, I do not for a moment say that religion now needs to utter her message of forgiveness with bated breath or uncertain tone; but I do mean to say that she needed (and has been compelled) to re-examine her definition of forgiveness that it might be brought once more into line with the facts of life. I assert that there were whole vast areas of evangelical religion where a conception of forgiveness was prevalent, which simply would

not square with the facts of life, and where for need of such a corrective as science has furnished there was the most appalling blindness to these facts of life, with the inevitable stream of consequences to public morality. To-day the stern reminders which science has sent us of the divinity of law have most healthily affected our gospel message and made it more virile and robust. Far more confidently than ever may we say that God loves us: but it is good that we have been reminded that all is law, if all is love, and law is the way God loves us.

(3) *Progress.*—And then if we on the side of religion have learned from science's emphasis on unity and on law, what have we not learned from her emphasis on ordered progress?

"We are all," the saying is, "evolutionists now." That means, I take it, not that we claim to be scientists, nor even wholly to understand the theory of evolution and the part played in it by the principle of natural selection, but that the evolutionary idea has coloured our thinking on nearly everything. It has revolutionised the presentation of the Christian religion. It has almost fundamentally altered our view of Holy Scripture, of the history it contains, and of the doctrines it unfolds. It has, I believe, had a very close connection with the revival of historical studies, and has even for the least religious mind

suffused history, if I may so speak, with the Providential idea. It has opened out to the religious man a new view of the relations between what his fathers called secular history, and the sacred history in the Scriptures. And, above all, it has set Christ in a new light. Confined within human limits, He is the stultification of the calculations of evolutionists; viewed as our moral natures direct us to view him, He is the goal and crown of the evolutionary process in the history of man.

As one surveys the field of our indebtedness as religionists to that discipline of natural inquiry (in the triumphs of which we recognise a special manifestation of the Holy Ghost), our sense of debtorship to science passes into a sense of debtorship to God, and gratitude to man passes into a thankful worship of God. If our brethren who study natural science do not all as yet join us in this transmutation of gratefulness into worship, we shall not lose hope that ultimately they will do this too; for if there is one portion of the universe more than another in which evidences of evolutionary design are manifest, it is in the marvellous growth of the school of science itself, and it is the best and humblest pupils in that school who will most certainly recognise that behind themselves and their work is a power, not themselves, that makes for knowledge and truth.

(4) *Benefactorship.*—And now as I close I must mention one other aspect in which I, as an agent of religion, look upon my friend who works in the laboratory of science.

It is not enough to claim an equal right with him or an equal status as a student of realities; nor to feel that his work and one's own in a very real sense constitute a collaboration; nor even to express one's debt to science. One must do more: one must claim that religion has something to give the man of science. It is good that one should own to debtorship; but one must claim, in the name of one's message, benefactorship as well.

I said at the beginning that the facts with which the scientist deals have to do with successions of phenomena, with processes and sequences; while religion deals with origins, with purpose, and with destiny.

Yes; but the scientist cannot escape from the fact that he possesses certain moral experiences which continually impinge upon questions of origin, purpose, and destiny; and (*quâ* scientist) he has no faculty and no materials for dealing with these moral experiences.

But the exponent of religion has that material, and the exponent of the Christian religion has it in unrivalled richness.

The scientist needs religion not only when shaken by storms of sorrow or remorse; he needs religion

to relieve the malaise of spiritual hunger and discontent, to hearten him in the midst of these nameless faintings of *faith in life* which come to the believer and unbeliever alike; to quiet, if not to explain, turbulent moods of the spirit, which, in all, tend to overset the balance of self-poise in the face of life's troubles; to nourish and respond to aspirations, without the uplift of which, life were a poor and jejune thing; to fortify and prepare, not so much for death as for judgment, of which last the unbeliever has as definite an instinct as the Christian has; and, finally, to transmute into a glad certainty, through Jesus Christ, his hopeful guesses about immortality.

Unless I had messages like these to give them, I, for one, could not dare to preach week after week to men who know so much more than I of the works of God; but possessing messages like these, it would not be modesty, it would be cowardly treason to the affluence of Christ's evangel, if I said that, having received much from science, I had not, as a herald of religion, far, far more to give.

Much has yet to be done in the patient pursuit of knowledge, in the sharp conflict of argument, and in the experience of discipline, before science and religion understand one another. In particular, the scientific temper (as Father Waggett calls it) is needed in religion, as the religious temper is in

science. But the tempers are not really two, but one. In both spheres, men need patience, fidelity to their ignorance, freedom from pride and prejudice, sacrificial love of truth, the spirit of adventure, and the spirit of reverence.

That temper the Holy Spirit is diffusing widely to-day before our very eyes: it is only discredited pseudo-science that is arrogant and blasphemous, as it is pseudo-religion that is proud, obscurantist, and narrow. And the diffusion of that Christian temper alike over both these great spheres of inquiry I take to be a significant and hopeful omen of the coming of the time when (to adapt the memorable words of Cardinal Newman) "the whole mind of the world will be absorbed into the Philosophy of the Cross, as the element in which it lives, and the form upon which it is moulded."

SCIENCE AND RELIGION, by the Rev. FATHER W. J. CROFTON, S.J., M.A., Glasgow.

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

It would appear that nowadays the words Science and Religion cannot be used in juxtaposition without suggesting the idea of conflict and strife. A powerful and popular press has disseminated throughout Europe the notion that the two are armed for deadly fight, that they are engaged in a duel from which neither can emerge save by passing over the prostrate form of the other. It has become a sort of axiom with certain people that no one can be a scientific man—physicist, or geologist, or biologist, or even historian — and accept in whole or in part the time-honoured beliefs of Christianity. I know full well that such a misapprehension is not shared by the greatest leaders of thought in modern days, by the giants of intellectual research, by those who have left their mark for all time on the branch of knowledge to which they have devoted their life. We who advocate that there is no real opposition between science and religion need feel no sense of shame, or look upon ourselves as reactionaries and obscurantists, when we find ourselves in the goodly company of the late venerated Chancellor of

this University, of Stokes and Clerk-Maxwell, or Cauchy and Pasteur. Still, we may perhaps for the sake of argument allow that the ordinary man of science, what has been called the "average Fellow of the Royal Society," is one who views religion with suspicion, if not with contempt and aversion. It is true that the "average" Privy Councillor, or Member of Parliament, or Royal Academician, may not be better affected to what concerns the supra-sensible world; but at any rate it is not *through* his duties and pursuits that he is brought into collision with the data of faith. What gives an added importance to the anti-religious statements of many whom the world at large regards as the exponents of recent science, is precisely that they proceed from men who are experts, and who may be expected to pronounce with some authority on questions which they have made their own. And when they assure the public that the dogmas of faith, the facts of the Jewish and Christian revelation, are hopelessly at variance with the ascertained laws of nature, their statements obtain a degree of credence which would not attach to the opinions of others less eminently qualified. We cannot therefore afford to neglect the arguments which they adduce, or affect a lofty indifference, a proud aloofness in presence of the attacks made by them on the religious position: if we do not bestir our-

selves to maintain our ground and strengthen our defences, we shall find whole multitudes of educated men and women deserting our common Christianity and flocking into the camp of Agnosticism. It is, I take it, with a view to check so appalling a contingency that this Society of St Ninian has been founded, and it is to be hoped that the lectures and discussions which will take place under its auspices may have the effect of supporting and confirming the religious beliefs of many who attend the meetings.

Now, amongst those who are anxious to take a part in the general defence of religion, there has recently arisen a school which, under the name of the New Theology in English-speaking countries, and of Modernism on the Continent, has attained a degree of notoriety with which we are all familiar. It is not my purpose to deal with the large issues that have been raised by the upholders of the system: the time at my disposal, no less than the nature of my task, prohibit any such undertaking. I only wish to draw your attention to a method of apologetics which has been adopted by some of the most prominent members of the school. They aver that the advance of knowledge in modern times has proved fatal to religion as it was formerly understood. Science and criticism have battered down the walls behind which it was

hitherto supposed to stand impregnable. The old arguments that filled its armoury have lost their edge, and are about as untrustworthy and ineffective as the bows and arrows of savages, or the pikes of our forefathers, would be when pitted against modern weapons of precision. And yet, they say, religion is not affected by the destruction of all that has heretofore been her stay and support. She emerges transfigured, sublimated, raised into a higher, more ideal, more ethereal sphere. We had grown accustomed to the notion of a conflict between herself and human science. We may now dismiss all such fear, for the reason that a conflict is a matter of impossibility. Science and religion have nothing in common, they dwell apart in separate realms; they move along parallel planes, which can never meet, however far they are produced; and accordingly all fear of a collision is precluded. There can be no more opposition between the experimental order, which is the domain of science, and the transcendental, which belongs to religion, than there can be between gravitation and patriotism, or between the colours of the rainbow and a general election. And if it has hitherto been considered that there lies a debatable ground between the two, its very existence is denied by the advocates of the new apologetic.

Revelation in particular, according to them, is

nothing external or objective; its substance is not contained in the pages of a book or in the traditions of a Church; the Bible is but a record of the religious "experiences" of former generations, which may or may not agree with our own. Revelation is essentially subjective, inward, removed from the senses; it consists in the keen consciousness of right and wrong, in the inner prompting to do what is just, upright, honourable, than which nothing can be more unmistakably the voice of God speaking within us. So too, the formulas by means of which Councils and Assemblies have expressed the dogmas of their belief have no scientific value; the sense in which they were understood by their framers may have been very different from that in which they are received now, or will be received in the future. They do not establish a landmark, they do not constitute a test; they are a fluctuating, shifting quantity, which may be readily adapted and altered so as to suit the peculiar character and meet the progressive demands of each age, and may vary in accordance with the experiences and idiosyncrasies of each individual.

It is seen at once that in such a system there is no room for any of the alleged opposition between science and religion which is occupying us to-day. So long as rivals are imprisoned in different cells there is little fear that they will come to blows. The question, however, remains, whether the

advocates of the new ideas have not induced a state of affairs far more dangerous to the theological position than was involved in the assertion of irreconcilable enmity, if indeed they have not dealt the death-stroke to the cause they profess to uphold. They evade our present difficulty, no doubt; but in doing so they surrender everything that makes religion a reality and an impelling force. They throw away to the wolves its revealed character; they strip it of its objectivity; they deny its intelligibility in mental concepts; they refuse it even the power of expression in human language: it appeals, not to the reason of man, but to his feelings, to his emotions, to his ethical and æsthetical nature. Faith, instead of being an act of the intellect, the straightforward acceptance of an external revelation, becomes a sentiment, a taste, a pleasurable sensation, an inward consolation. Now, I venture to affirm that such a system will never satisfy that fabulous personage who has been called the man in the street: it is too recondite, too artificial; the over-refinement is too apparent, I may say it is too contrary to the sturdy common-sense of mankind. But, least of all will it satisfy the man of science, whom it was sought to placate. His inexorable logic will pursue it even into the sphere wherein it endeavours to isolate religion. Beliefs which are represented as simply *non-rational* will soon be sifted, and analysed, and

pronounced to be *irrational*, contrary to reason, because they cannot stand the test of reason, our ultimate arbiter of truth and untruth. It may then be confidently said that a public service has been rendered by Pope Pius X., when in a recent Encyclical he has raised his voice in solemn tones to denounce *urbi et orbi* the aberrations of those who would thus reduce religion to a mere airy nothing, an unsubstantial fabric woven of personal dreams and fancies, and resting on no more solid basis than a subjective empiricism and individualism.

Nothing, then, is gained by shirking, or running away from, the difficulty that confronts us when we are told of the opposition of modern science to religion. At the same time, it would be foolish to allow ourselves to be unduly frightened, and to magnify the difficulty until it is made an insurmountable obstacle to faith. In fact, the opposition of which so much is made nowadays is an apparent opposition, not a real one. It cannot be real, on *a priori* grounds, for the reason that truth is one, and cannot be conceived as self-contradictory. It imposes therefore upon us the necessity of revising our methods and reasonings, whenever seemingly discordant results are obtained by independent processes. There are many, it is true, hostile to religion, who maintain that physical science needs no inquiry into the legitimacy of its conclusions, and that it is theology which must

ever bow and retire whenever a difficulty arises. But such a view involves a *petitio principii;* it assumes that physical science exercises a monopoly in the world of knowledge, that there is no certitude save such as comes within its scope and purview. Whereas our contention is that Faith contributes a positive element to our knowledge of the universe as a whole, that theology is as truly a science as biology, and that it can deduce consequences from the facts of Revelation as validly as Euclid derives his propositions from certain fundamental axioms and postulates. "Let the doctrine of the Incarnation be true," says Newman, "is it not at once of the nature of an historical fact and of a metaphysical? Let it be true there are Angels: how is this not a point of knowledge in the same sense as the naturalist's asseveration that there are myriads of living things on the point of a needle? That the earth is to be consumed by fire is, if true, as large a fact as that huge monsters once played amidst its depths; and that Antichrist is to come is as categorical a heading to a chapter of history as that Nero or Julian was Emperor of Rome" (*Univ. Educ.*, p. 46). Like every other science, then, religion and theology repose upon certain first principles and fundamental facts. These principles and facts are not arbitrary, they are not laid down without warrant. They are established by the same

historical, critical, and philosophical proofs which we use in ascertaining the events of the past, or in studying the nature and the functions of the human soul. And if they lead back, as they often do, to deeper principles yet, to what are called mysteries, surely it is not for physical science to throw a stone at theology on that account, seeing how baffling are the notions that form the very starting-point of its own researches. When an explanation has been given of the nature of matter, of force, of energy, when no further dimness attaches to our idea of an all-pervading ether, of elemental affinities, of a self-actuating vital principle, it will be time to reproach Christianity with the fact that it sets out from such incomprehensible doctrines as the existence of a God distinct from the world, or a Trinity of Persons, or a Hypostatic Union of Natures.

If, then, it be granted that religion is not a mere emotional phase of our consciousness, but that it conveys to us definite knowledge, and adds to our stock of ascertained truth, then every opposition between its conclusions and the results of other branches of inquiry must be treated in the same way as the divergences of other sciences *inter se*. For—as is important to note, and is often overlooked—it is not between science and religion alone that there is to be found an apparent clash and disagreement. The conflict

exists wherever we have to co-ordinate results which have been obtained by independent methods and different lines of approach. Geology and Astronomy have been engaged in an almost secular strife concerning the age of the earth; the Higher Criticism, as it is called, and Archæology have on many points arrived at conclusions quite opposed to each other. History is not always in accord with many current theories of Political Economy or Sociology. But we do not thereupon throw overboard the science which happens to contradict our favoured view. We exercise patience; we wait for fuller information, for more searching experiments; we revise our reasonings; we test the soundness of our original principles; and meanwhile we suspend our judgment, in the entire persuasion that a reconciliation will be effected in time, and the truth made manifest: *Magna est veritas, et prævalebit.* Such too should be our attitude in presence of any difference which may arise between science and religion. We have in the first instance to determine whether the conflict is not due—as often happens—to the overstepping of one of the parties into the domain of the other, a process which obviously can only lead to confusion and misunderstanding. The Galileo case affords a curious double example of the evil of such interference, for if a congregation of Cardinals was not the proper tribunal to pass judgment on

the Copernican system, neither was Galileo keeping to his rôle of physicist when he undertook to interpret Scripture to the public. We have again, and more frequently still, to investigate whether the so-called conflict has not originated in the mistaking of scientific "theories" for well-established certainties. Modern science, if it makes profession of anything, asserts that it deals with facts only, that it will accept nothing on faith, that every conclusion it arrives at must be based on flawless experiments and a rigorous method of proof. It follows that a theory or working hypothesis may be useful for purposes of research, but it is not, and cannot be, science. The laws of optics, the laws that govern falling bodies or regulate chemical combinations, truly belong to science, for we have exact proof, qualitative and quantitative, of their existence, and in the present order of things we cannot conceive them to be superseded. I might have included the Conservation of Energy, were it not for the flutter excited by the discovery of radium a few years ago as to the safety even of that great principle. Now I would remark that the most bitter antagonist of the religious view will hardly venture to say that Christianity and its dogmas are placed in serious jeopardy by these or other similar undoubted laws of the physical order. On the other hand, the Undulatory Theory, the

Nebular Theory, the Atomic Theory, Natural Selection, are avowedly working hypotheses, some more, some less solidly established; "theories," as their name indicates, which none of their authors and active promoters have ever considered final and irreversible, and which a few awkward facts would relegate to the scrap-heap where lie so many theories, popular enough in their day, since exploded and forgotten. Now, if we free our minds for a moment from all details, and consider the question before us in its broadest aspect, I think we shall own that the strife between science and religion of which we hear so much is almost entirely confined to the field occupied by some of the theories I have mentioned, and others which might be added. The opposition then is not between dogmas and scientific facts, but between dogmas and certain hypotheses which have been put forward to correlate those facts; and until these hypotheses have been demonstrated to be realities, there can be no question of any real dissension, and no call upon the Church to re-adjust her formularies. It would take me too long to develop the subject, and to illustrate it by examples taken from the various sciences: *non omnia possumus omnes.* I would only remark that it is not merely in the realm of physical and natural knowledge that scientific men are apt to formulate theories, and by dint of dwelling upon

them come to consider them as uncontrovertible verities, but the tendency is to be found even amongst mathematicians, who can sometimes lose themselves in unreal abstractions, and speculate on the properties of a fourth dimension, or discuss the curvature of our three-dimensional space!

The moral I would point as flowing from these few considerations is that we must have patience one with another. Instead of publishing from the housetops that there can be no peace between religion and science, our object should be to harmonise what seems discordant, to reconcile the varying results of honest inquirers in different fields, to cultivate a spirit of good-will towards every branch of knowledge, secular or theological, which promotes the physical, social, and moral welfare of mankind. *Cunctae res difficiles.* What we ignore is far more extensive than what we know. "Science has done much for us," says Carlyle. "But it is a poor science that would hide from us the great, deep, sacred infinitude of Nescience, whither we can never penetrate, on which all Science swims as a mere superficial film" (*Heroes* i.). This wholesome, though perhaps humiliating consciousness of our ignorance may tend to make us more distrustful of our own reasonings and more tolerant of the opinions of others; when a contradiction seems manifest, it may induce us to reserve our judgment, and to

seek to deepen our studies in the hopes of reaching a more secure foothold. You will remember how Laplace once calculated that, given certain initial conditions of distance and velocity, the moon would always have been full and reigned over the night as the sun does over the day. Certain *esprits forts* took occasion immediately to impugn the evidences of a beneficent and intelligent Deity. The *coup de grâce*, however, was given by Liouville, who showed that, though the theory was correct, the equilibrium was unstable—perhaps a remarkable illustration of Bacon's dictum that a little knowledge may take us away from God, but that further knowledge will bring us back to Him.

We may be further helped to this spirit of mutual toleration and goodwill by yet another consideration, and it will be my last. Religion is not merely on her defence, as is often implied in the attacks that are made upon her. She has arguments to bring forward in her own behalf, which cannot be spurned and set aside as things of no weight or value. From the nature of the case those arguments are not and cannot be of a physical nature; they are metaphysical, they are moral, and the certitude they generate is on the lowest computation of the moral order. We must, however, be on our guard against thinking that moral certitude is necessarily weak

and unavailing when confronted with physical considerations. Moral proofs, when properly drawn out, may have as much effect in determining the assent of the understanding as any geometrical theorem. We are as certain of the existence of Cæsar as we are of the principle of Archimedes. That Christianity should be based on authority, the authority of a book, or the authority of a teaching Church, is therefore no antecedent prejudice to its truth, if only that authority is invested with the necessary guarantees. History is not slow to assert its rights, and yet it depends essentially upon authority, upon the testimony of men and of human documents. And science itself relies on authority far more than is commonly understood. Theoretically we could repeat the experiments contained in our text-books, but life is too short, the means and appliances are too few and too costly. The researches and discoveries of others are for the most part taken for granted; in practice we are content to abide by the testimony of men whom we consider to be expert and trustworthy. If, then, religion comes to us with due credentials in her hand, I contend that it is as much the duty of science to reckon with these, and in their light to modify or recast certain of its conclusions, as it may be the duty of the mathematician to reconsider his formulæ, if he finds them contradicted by experiment, or of the

theologian himself to interpret the data of revelation in a sense conform to the established facts of physics or biology.

Whenever the two sides agree to view the matters, on which there may be some difference of opinion, coolly and dispassionately, in a spirit of fairness and sweet reasonableness, desirous only that the truth may appear, not that they themthemselves may obtain the upper hand, the day will not be far distant when they succeed in adjusting their differences, and are enabled to join hands in a common effort to improve the material and spiritual condition of mankind.

COMPARATIVE HIEROLOGY AND THE CLAIMS OF REVELATION, by JOHN M. ROBERTSON, Esq., M.P., London.

COMPARATIVE HIEROLOGY AND THE CLAIMS OF REVELATION

It is an old observation that contact with one or more alien religions is apt to set up in the votaries of any one system either variation of belief, or a general tendency to religious scepticism. Such a tendency seems to be implicitly acknowledged in the many allusions of the Hebrew prophetic and priestly writers to the influence of surrounding cults on their compatriots; and it was within the sphere of the old empires which amalgamated or juxtaposed many creeds and deities that there seem to have risen the first movements of dissolvent pantheism. Among the Greeks analogous developments are first seen in Ionia, where Eastern and Western cultures met; and at a later stage they went far in Athens, the most cosmopolitan of communities in the Classic period. Later, we trace them among the early Moslems in Persia; among the Christian Crusaders; even, contrary to common assumption, among the Christian Spaniards in the period of their warfare with the Moors, which was much more racial and much less religious than is generally supposed. But even definitely religious

wars, and religious strifes which fall short of war, have the same tendency to generate religious diffidence in those who witness them. It was the French President Jeannin who, after seeing much of the wars of the Catholics and the Huguenots in France, remarked that a peace with two religions was better than a war with none; and the view became common, though it was not found that the restoration of peace stayed the process of scepticism. Ascham, Hooker, Bacon, and Bishop Fotherby testify decisively that in the reigns of Elizabeth and James there had arisen a great amount of unbelief in regard to both the dogmas and the sacred books of the Christian faith; and the causes indicated or inferrible are on the one hand the contact of English travellers with the life of Italy, and on the other the strifes of Protestant and Catholic, Puritan and Prelatist, at home. It was in 1624, when the Continental and the English tendencies had in part coalesced, that Lord Herbert of Cherbury, the literary founder of English Deism, published his *De Veritate*, which rejects the theorem of Revelation on grounds of comparative hierology, a study to which he made a further scholarly contribution in his *De religione gentilium* in 1663. In the same generation in France, La Bruyère specifies acquaintance with the religions of the heathen as a source of freethinking in his day; and an English work of 1705 on the analogies

of East Indian with Jewish customs pronounces the same judgment.

Now that the more or less systematic study of comparative hierology is a recognised part of theological training, it would be surprising if contemporary Rationalism did not exhibit systematically the same order of intellectual progression; and, this being the case, it is inevitable that the theology of our time should directly deal with the problem. I propose to put it to the test of philosophic reason, as dispassionately and scientifically as may be. Hebrew and Christian archæology is more and more clearly dependent upon the comparative study of religion for the scientific comprehension of its subject-matter; and some of the most suggestive of recent works on religious evolution are put forth by scholars who profess to see no reason in their subject-matter for abandoning the concept of revelation and the beliefs resulting from it. I may instance Professor F. B. Jevons, whose *Introduction to the History of Religion* repays study from any point of view. Mr Andrew Lang, in his later works, occupies a position at least nearer to that of Mr Jevons than to that of Naturalism; and the Rev. Mr Macculloch may be cited as a student who sees no incompatibility between the data of comparative hierology and what may be termed liberal orthodoxy.

Without going into any detailed discussion of

the writings of these scholars, and without limiting the possible positions of critical theology to any of their special theses, I will endeavour to generalise the implications of their argument into what seem to me to be the central propositions which may be alternatively contended for by a modern defender of the idea of Revelation.

(1) It may be argued, on the lines of the great work of Dr John Spencer, *De legibus Hebræorum*, published in 1685 (perhaps on the stimulus of Herbert), that the supernatural provision of Hebrew rites analogous to those of the surrounding peoples was part of the scheme of Revelation taken for granted in historic Christianity.

(2) It may be argued that Christian revelation consisted in the infusion of new ideas and ideals into a cult naturally evolved out of the primitive complex of religious thought traced by Professor Jevons and others.

(3.) It may be further argued, in development of the last position, that Revelation is to be understood as in some sense involved in the whole of the prior evolution, even in the primeval form of the cannibal sacrament, which is accepted by Mr Jevons as a rite on the true line of religion.

(4.) It may be yet further argued that Revelation is to be understood as involved in some sense in all the religions of the world, and that either all are

to be viewed as true for those who accepted or still accept them — which would seem to be the upshot of the thesis of Lessing on "The Education of the Human Race"—or the Christian revelation is internally certificated to be the culminating one by its ethical and its dogmatic adaptations to human needs.

(5.) Or, finally, it may be argued on the lines of the older orthodoxy, that all analogies to Hebrew and Christian religion in other faiths and cults are to be explained as imperfect developments from primeval Adamic religion, to which only Revelation, Hebrew and Christian, could give their proper form and significance.

If I have omitted any currently held position relevant to our problem, it is certainly not from any wish to ignore it. I have formulated those which seem to me the least, as well as those the most, likely to be maintained by instructed theologians. It is not for me, however, to make any assumptions as to which would most readily be eliminated or accepted by my audience; and I shall briefly outline my own process of elimination, beginning with the position last put.

The belief in a diffused primeval knowledge, limited but true, of a deity who had made himself known to men, but from whom men progressively went astray, was once an integral part of orthodox theology; and if it is surrendered by theology,

something presumably must be put in its place. But in the form stated it appears to be entirely dependent on the literal retention of the Genesaic account of the creation and fall of man; and I am fain to limit the field of the present discussion by setting aside that credence as one the examination of which would leave no time whatever for our special problem. For the sake of the argument, I will suppose that those who here and now stand for the concept of Revelation will treat that narrative either as a didactic allegory supernaturally designed for a primitive people, or as an element of Semitic folklore preserved in a cult which the factor of Revelation elevated or transformed. On either view we are led to the defensive conception first sketched —that of Revelation as beginning in a planned adaptation of existing rites for the early Hebrews.

If, however, that position is taken up with a definite inclusion of the Darwinian view of the evolution of human life, the theologian is face to face with the old demand that he should justify the notion of a deity who for an enormous period of time leaves primitive man to grope in darkness, and at length furnishes only a temporary revelation to one race, which is enjoined to remain rigorously apart from and hostile to all others. I will dogmatically avow, in order to economise time, that I cannot conceive how such a notion could

for a moment appeal to any one who had not been first and foremost quite uncritically possessed by the concrete dogma, whether as a member of the people alleged to have been thus chosen, or as one trained from the beginning in the unquestioning acceptance of the Bible as *the* revelation. In the latter case, it suffices to say that he who affirms Revelation on the score of mere authority is in effect affirming it on his own. He alone vouches to me the actuality of the authority he alleges to be sacrosanct. If he propounds reasons drawn from the content of the alleged revelation as apart from its claims to be revelation, he has abandoned the ground of mere authority. And, seeing that other faiths claim as confidently as the Hebrew to be supernaturally revealed, he must either accord the claim in some sense to all or proceed to give reasons for granting it in the one case only.

I am bound to suppose that some of my audience claim to be able to give such reasons; and I will somewhat summarily reduce them, so far as I know them, to the classes of arguments from miracles, arguments from history, and arguments from ethical content or result. The first are met by the answer that the other creeds also affirm miracles, and that instructed people in ever larger numbers are agreeing to treat all as either incredible or unverifiable. And prophecy, in the sense of prediction, being miracle, that element

in the old argument from Jewish history disappears, leaving only the fact of Jewish separateness, which is a phenomenon on all fours with the separateness of the Parsees. As to ethical content, finally—and in this we may include the argument from the character of Jewish conduct—I answer that an ethic at many points higher than that of the Pentateuch or even of the prophets is to be found evolved on a line of culture which, in the terms of the Hebrew claim, is outside of Revelation. It may suffice to recall that Mr Gladstone put the ethic of the Homeric Achæans above that of the Hebrew Patriarchs. And the gist or upshot of these considerations is that the very concept of a separatist revelation is opposed to the claim by which theists have thought to supersede the mere affirmation of authority—the claim, to wit, that a benevolent deity might reasonably be expected to desire to reveal himself. Such a claim seems devoid of significance when the deity is supposed not only to postpone his revelation through whole æons, but to limit it stringently to one race when given, and only ages later to withdraw the bar without attempting as deity to make the revelation universal. If revelation is to be rationally believed in, it must be on the conception of it as a reasonable processus.

If the foregoing line of argument be to any extent acquiesced in, we seem to be reduced

to a choice between the two theses (*a*) that, an element of Revelation or supernatural communication being conceded to all prior forms of religion, the Hebrew and Christian revelations consisted successively in an infusion of new ideas and ideals into systems of ritual and dogma already produced by revelation, and (*b*) that, Revelation being supposed to begin with the Hebrews, previous religion represented an evolution, *without* Revelation, of a variety of dogmas and rites so satisfactory to the deity that they only needed some reform to constitute them a revelation. The latter thesis is so artificial that I am perhaps straining theory in supposing it to be maintainable by any contemporary theologian. But, noting it as schematically possible, I would simply say that I cannot see how, on the one hand, a line can be critically drawn between the two stages supposed, otherwise than by mere reversion to the authority of the sacred books, or how, on the other hand, any limit can be placed to subsequent developments which must equally be regarded as revelations. Apart from sheer authoritarianism, in short, there seems to be no logical standing ground for theology short of the thesis that Revelation is to be conceived as common in varying measure to all religions, and that discrimination must be made by a process of criticism.

I say "in varying measure," for I do not see

how the theologian can venture to claim it in the same degree for all. If that were granted, it would follow either that all are equally true and equally profitable, or that all are equally ordained for those who have received them. Both propositions are countersenses in that they exclude judgment under the appearance of passing judgment. The concept "equally true" voids of all practical content the concept of Revelation; for if all religious systems so called are to be regarded as alike true, we at once stumble over their cosmological content, which would thus be certificated as true and revealed, while science is to be thought as neither, or is in turn to be included in the concept of Revelation. And if science be included, what can be left out of the concept? The notions "equally profitable" and "equally ordained," again, similarly involve the exclusion of all criticism, persuasion, and preference: we are thrust back on the most extravagant of all forms of authoritarianism.

But if we try to apply intelligibly the thesis that Revelation enters into all religions in varying degrees, to what conclusions can we attain? In the terms of the case, we are to cognise Revelation as such in terms of our standards of congruity, probability, and moral and philosophical fitness. Then is everything Revelation which squares with our acquired ethics and our critical sense? If so,

how discriminate between so-called religious and so-called scientific truth, so-called religious and so-called secular history, so-called religion and so-called speculation, justice and common-sense? Surely the authoritarian of the old school, whom we have ruled out *qua* authoritarian, has the best of it here when he now asks whether we are not in effect claiming to be ourselves the vehicles of revelation. What else does that theologian do who distinguishes the geniune Revelation from the spurious, or, if you like, the subsisting Revelation from the superseded?

Consider again the concrete problems which face the theologian who undertakes the function in question. I will take him as represented by Frederick Denison Maurice, who sixty years ago grappled with the ground problem of Comparative Hierology in his Boyle Lectures on "The Religions of the World and their Relations to Christianity."[1] Very boldly he put the fundamental issue in his first lecture[2]:—

"It is asked, Is there not ground for supposing that all the different religious systems, and not one only, may be legitimate products of that faith which is so essential a part of man's constitution? Are not they manifestly adapted to peculiar times and localities and races? Is it not probable that the theology of all alike is something merely accidental, an imperfect theory about

[1] Delivered in 1845-46; published in 1848.

[2] Pp. 8-10.

our relations to the universe, which will in due time give place to some other? Have we not reason to suppose that Christianity, instead of being, as we have been taught, a revelation, has its root in the heart and intellect of man, as much as any other system? Are there not the closest, the most obvious relations between it and them? Is it not subject to the same law of decay from the progress of knowledge and society with all the rest? Must we not expect that it too will lose all its mere theological characteristics, and that what at last survives of it will be something of a very general character, some great ideas of what is good and beautiful, some excellent maxims of life, which may very well assimilate, if they be not actually the same, with the essential principles which are contained in all other religions, and which will also, it is hoped, abide for ever?

"Notions of this kind will be found, I think, in much of the erudite as well of the popular literature of this day; they will often be heard in social circles; they are undoubtedly floating in the minds of us all. While we entertain them, it is impossible that we can, with sound hearts and clear consciences, seek to evangelise the world. Yet they are not to be spoken of as if they proceeded from a mere denying, unbelieving spirit: they are often entertained by minds of deepest earnestness; they derive their plausibility from facts which cannot be questioned, and which a Christian should not wish to question. They may, I believe, if fairly dealt with, help to strengthen our own convictions, to make our duty plainer, and to show us better how we shall perform it. All their danger lies in their vagueness."

"Danger," I suppose, here means danger to orthodoxy. Let us see if, taking it to mean danger to the thesis we have just been considering, the proposition "all their danger lies in their vagueness" will hold good. Maurice, it is true, does not definitely treat the non-Christian faiths

as products of Revelation: he exhibits his usual difficulty in reaching any explicit conclusion. But he takes up a position which is at least half-way to the thesis we are now considering.

"Have we not," he says[1] of the Hindoos, "found an assurance in the mind of these people that all the efforts of thought in them must originate in a communication from above, and require fresh communications to meet them?" and he sums up that "if we calmly consider it . . . we shall confess that the Hindoo is right in his belief, that the wisdom of which he sees the image and reflexion must speak and declare itself to him; that he cannot always be left to grope his way amidst the shadows which it casts in his own mind or in the world around him." Then he goes on: "I ask nothing more than the Hindoo system and the Hindoo life as evidence that there is that in man which demands a revelation—that there is *not* that in him which makes the revelation; I ask no clearer proof of the fact, that whenever the religious feeling or instinct in man works freely, without an historical revelation, it must beget a system of priestcraft. It must be satisfied by God, or overlaid by man, or stifled altogether."

In sum, Maurice's doctrine of comparative religion appears to be this: that each great religious system lives in virtue of having affirmed

[1] P. 54.

some important religious truth—the Mohammedan that of the divine will; the Hindoo that of divine immanence, or that of the presence of evil in life (it is not quite clear which); the Buddhist that of the power of the human intellect; and so on; that each of these has for us a lesson, but each leaves a gap; and that Christianity fills the gap. The scheme is rather that of a progressive revelation than that of a single and exclusive revelation. But how does Maurice make good his thesis of the filling of the gap? So far as I can construe his eloquence, his test is one of socio-political success. The other nations are morally and materially backward because of the incompleteness of their faiths: Christianity is the creed of the advanced nations because it best satisfies the needs of human nature.

But if this implicit plea be taken as explicit, and criticised on its merits, it incurs at once two objections: that on the one hand Christendom was long unprogressive, even from our present point of view, while Islam was progressive; that Christian Abyssinia is, to this day, barbaric and illiterate; that Christian Byzantium was stagnant for a thousand years, and then overthrown by triumphant Islam; that all the lands of early Christianity are to this day Moslem, since the earlier Moslem conquest; and that many Christian lands—as Poland, Ireland, Greece, Spain—have

had evil fates; while on the other hand Christianity has been arraigned and renounced by myriads who find it wholly unsatisfying, and the most civilised and progressive countries are precisely those in which the criticism of Christianity has gone furthest. Maurice himself wrote in 1848: "The ultimate tendencies of Buddhism to entire evaporation, to mere negation, are manifest enough. The like tendencies assuredly exist, perhaps are becoming stronger every day, in Christendom." (Pref. p. xix.) What was true then is surely true now. Where, then, is the test? Is the answer to the Naturalists merely this, that the supernaturalness of Christianity is proved by its subsistence? What then preserved for five thousand years the religion of Osiris; and what now preserves that of Brahma? If the Hindoo is less advanced in civilisation than the Christian, is not his faith so much the more adapted to him, and therefore *pro tanto* divine, in terms of Maurice's thesis? Is it seriously asserted again that Revelation is finally certified by the counting of heads—that *vox populi* is literally *vox Dei?* And if the most widely held faith carries the day against the others, is it the same with the most numerous Christian sect as against the others?

It is so plainly impossible to find logical or moral foothold in a pseudo-objective test of this kind that I will turn without further ado to that

quasi-subjective test which in these days is most commonly posited by educated Christians as giving them their warrant for belief in their possession of a revelation—the test of religious experience. Ostensibly this is an appeal to the highest tribunal, the supreme court of revision, the individual conscience. Supposing the appeal to be strictly conducted and faithfully tried, we have still a criterion confessedly non-scientific, and valid only for the individual. By the same process the Zoroastrian, the Brahman, the Buddhist, the Moslem gets *his* warrant for the supernaturally revealed character of his faith; and equally the Naturalist renews his warrant for placing all upon the same footing. On the ground of the absolute claim from "experience," the very conception of truth begins to disintegrate. Whatever is earnestly or ecstatically believed is *ipso facto* divine revelation. "The Will to Believe" comes in to deepen the confusion, and rational proof ceases to be a desideratum. The state of mind produced by actual drug-taking has the same warrant as that of the ordinary experiential believer; and we know through Professor James how admirably the drug-taking mystic can write, and how superbly contemptuous he can be of the normal mental life.

Is this attitude of religious solipsism then likely to be permanently possible for any religious

community as such, to say nothing of an entire society? For the solipsist, of course, that question is no test, if he will be loyal to his solipsism. But is he? Is not this whole dialectic of "religious experience" developed as a means of supporting *collective* religion? Has it not been made an article of ordinary ecclesiastical propaganda, assimilated exactly as dogmas were in the past? And is it not the fact that the satisfaction set up in a believing mind by the argument from religious experience depends for its continuance on the known reception of the same formula by a number of others—by the given denomination at large, or by a number of thinkers with prestige? It seems to me to be clearly so; and in that case the test is not really a subjective one at all, but merely a pseudo-objective one—a variant of the old theistic argument *e consensu gentium.* Now, this argument always involves for the faithful inquirer the ordeal set up by the spontaneous or the reasoned incredulity of the Naturalist; and to refuse to meet that ordeal is to surrender the claim to let so-called religious truth grapple with so-called error. In that event the individual believer in a revelation is left as a law unto himself, each man's special experience being thus of the nature of a special revelation. On such a basis no collective creed is sincerely possible: every variation is in the terms of the case valid:

the individual has not even the right of persuasion, save in so far as he may hope that his experience will countervail for another that other's experience.

In this state of intellectual atomism, of course, the very concept of comparative hierology is impossible. The implication of all science is that from the collation of phenomena there may be induced a general truth or law; but for him who really believes that his special religious experience constitutes a revelation, all incompatible experiences are either excommunicated as fraudulent or diabolical, or left in the region of pure mystery, untroubled by questioning visitations from him. And as our inquiry to-day proceeds on the assumption of the recognition of a possible comparative hierology, we are forced back to a ground on which rational comparison of data and rational inference are possible. But if the foregoing process of elimination is valid, there is no preliminary footing for the comparative hierologist as such, save that of universal Naturalism. That is to say, the concept of special or exceptional revelation is for his science what the conception of special or exceptional creation is for the astronomer, the geologist, or the biologist. His ultimate discrimination between religions, in other words, must be in itself naturalistic—a discrimination in terms of his reasoned estimate of the credi-

bility of given narratives and the fitness of given philosophemes and moral doctrines. For him the best religion will simply be the most highly evolved, and, in the terms of the case, there can be no terminus. There can be no sacrosanct dogma; no irrepealable formula. The old specific term revelation has become non-significant as such, like the term creation: it applies either to all doctrine or to none; and if it be taken as a synonym for scientific truth it is still non-significant. He may still prefer monotheism to polytheism, Christianity to Buddhism, but only as the biologist may "prefer" the horse to the zebra, or the elephant to the rhinoceros — as being more profitable to the more civilised man.

It is not to be expected that such a conclusion will be readily or cheerfully accepted by those trained in any given creed claiming to be a supernatural revelation. The comparatively quietistic theory of Spencer of Cambridge was so far from being tolerable to temperaments trained on the lines of faith, that it was practically ignored by professional scholars till anthropology had newly forced forward the problem in the nineteenth century. In other words, men instinctively recoiled from the very work of comparative hierology, even with the revelationist concept formally safeguarded. And again and again we find the promoters of naturalistic criticism doing their work

under a conviction that they are serving supernaturalism on the very ground of their task. Thus Astruc wrought out his discrimination of the Elohist and Jehovist elements in the Pentateuch expressly by way of defending the Mosaic authorship on new lines against its impugners; even as Father Simon before him had done *his* analytical work by way of refuting the arguments of Spinoza. It would be hard to reckon how much we owe to the insight of men who had not insight enough to realise the consequences of their doctrines: practically all truth is attained by such means.

It is therefore not in the least surprising to find scholars whose work is logically subversive of the concept of Revelation claiming to maintain it against its assailants. Not only does Canon Sanday, for instance, avow his acceptance of the main results of the higher criticism of the Old Testament,[1] and proceed to affirm that "the old conviction that we have in it a revelation from God to man is not only unimpaired but placed on firmer foundations;" but Canon Driver puts in the front of his *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* the assertion that manifestly "both the religion of Israel itself, and the record of its history embodied in the Old Testament, are the work of men whose hearts have been

[1] *Inspiration:* Bampton Lectures for 1893, 5th ed. (1903), pp. 120-22.

touched and minds illumined in different degrees by the Spirit of God." In comment on the words of Canon Sanday I will simply cite those other words of Canon Driver, which confess that the main conclusions of the higher criticism are such as, "upon any neutral field of investigation, would have been accepted without hesitation by all conversant with the subject: they are only opposed in the present instance by some theologians because they are supposed to conflict with the requirements of the Christian faith.[1]" And in comment upon the claim in which Canon Driver coincides with Canon Sanday I will merely cite those further words of the former:—

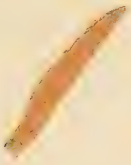
"The history of astronomy, geology, and, more recently, of biology, supplies a warning that the conclusions which satisfy the common, unbiassed, and unsophisticated reason of mankind prevail in the end. The price at which alone the traditional view can be maintained is too high."

It is that criterion that I have sought to apply to-day. The process of reason, free alike from presupposition and experiential predilection, is that which alone truly combines the objective and the subjective tests. It alone yields the thinker the personal certificate which conscience craves, with the endorsement from without which is stipulated for by sanity and modesty. To be entirely alone in opinion is to have the gravest ground for dis-

[1] *Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament*, preface.

quietude; to go in paths recommended solely by their safety or by the numbers which throng them is to renounce the higher intellectual and moral life. But the student can claim to be loyal to the largest experience in choosing, while upon the ground of any science, to be loyal to the law of universal science, and to recognise there no other allegiance.

COMPARATIVE RELIGION AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH, by the Rev. CANON MACCULLOCH, Portree.



COMPARATIVE RELIGION AND THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

The study of religions from a critical or scientific point of view, in other words Comparative Religion, or, less happily, the science of religions, is a thing of recent growth. When science has invaded every branch of human activity it was hardly to be expected that what is highest of all among man's aspirations would long remain outside the field of scientific investigation. To many it is no doubt abhorrent that science, investigating, as R. L. Stevenson said, with the cold finger of a starfish, should dare to lay hand upon the sacred ark wherein are centred all the highest and holiest aspirations and hopes of humanity. They forget, perhaps, that according to all precedent, it is science which ought to suffer, like the men of Beth-shemesh, while the ark itself should remain intact. I hope, however, to show before the end of this paper that not only is the investigation likely to be profitable to the truly scientific investigation, but that religion itself may benefit and its highest and final form be even more firmly established. If that highest form should be proved to have sprung ultimately from lowly

beginnings, like man himself, if again it should lose what after all are mere excrescences upon its noble fabric, none need be dismayed. For it is possible, as Emerson reminds us, to bear the disappearance of things we have been wont to reverence without losing our reverence. And on the other hand, if, as we believe, there be any truth in religion, science, which is the friend of truth, will only establish that truth the more firmly.

The idea of comparing religions for one purpose or another long antedates the more strictly scientific comparison. We owe much to Herodotus from a comparative point of view, and several other classical writers were equally fond of noting points of likeness or of difference between their own and other faiths. We need not go outside the pages of the New Testament to find other examples of this method. There the new Christian faith is constantly compared with the existing Jewish religion, and S. Paul, confronting an audience of cultured pagans and philosophers, though he points to the more excellent way of Christianity, was by no means blind to what was good in paganism. Again, the theologians of the Eastern Church, whose good influence was, alas! to be so soon overborne by the weight of the more uncompromising Westerns, and especially by S. Augustine, were quite sympathetic in their

treatment of paganism, and though not always impartial in their co-ordination of facts, were yet scientific enough to show that many pagan doctrines and rites resembled each other, and also paved the way for Christianity. Paganism, however, was soon to disappear, and it was not till the epoch of the Crusades and, later, the Renaissance, that other forms of religion than the Christian appeared upon the field of vision and began also to be examined. Meanwhile, outside Christianity, a Mohammedan prince, Akbar, Emperor of India, in the sixteenth century, showed a laudable desire to investigate and understand other faiths than his own. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the investigation proceeded apace, and much knowledge was accumulated, but almost invariably it was with a view to discover that "key to all the mythologies" over which the pedantic Dr Casaubon in *Middlemarch* spent so much time and labour. The more truly scientific study of religions may be said to have begun only in the nineteenth century, and even then it was somewhat too often dominated by the thought of the key to fit all locks. Comte explained all religion from a primitive fetichism, Herbert Spencer from a primitive ghost-worship; Max Müller resolved everything into sun and dawn myths, certain German investigators into storm myths. And though recent investigators

have wrought upon a much wider field of knowledge, they, too, have not been without the craze for one all-compelling formula which would explain religion wherever found. Totemism, like that blessed word Mesopotamia, has had much to answer for, and at present, in the works of Mannhardt and Frazer, what that redoubtable mediævalist, Mr Arthur Machen, has recently called "the Covent Garden theory," seems to prevail—the theory viz., that agricultural ritual for the benefit of growth in field or fold, lies behind most of the higher forms of religious phenomena.

Nevertheless the scientific investigation proceeds apace, and we now know much more about the probable beginnings of religion, about the actual nature not only of savage but of the greater faiths, and about what Professor James has aptly styled "the varieties of religious experience," than could have been hoped for by the investigators of three or four decades ago. Anyone who has devoted the least time to the study of the subject knows what a vast amount of material on all these aspects of the science has already been accumulated, how much has already been done by way of sifting and classifying, and how much still remains to be done by way of solving the numerous problems which have arisen.

Before proceeding to discuss the question of

how far such a science as that of comparative religion is likely to affect the Christian faith in one way or another, either beneficially or the reverse, we may ask at this stage what the precise value of such a science is. I shall only point out a few ways in which, it seems to me, this comparatively youthful science has already given brilliant and valuable results.

First of all it has enabled us to see that religion is for all practical purposes a universal phenomenon. Quite recently it was boldly maintained that there were tribes, if not races, which were absolutely without any religion. And even now it is not uncommon to read in some book of travels that some savage tribe knows no god, acknowledges, like the Sadducees, neither angel nor spirit, breathes no prayer, and has no hope beyond the grave. Frequently, however, our traveller goes on to describe some rite or some belief which gives evidence of a fairly wide religious outlook on the part of this so-called non-religious tribe. Of course everything depends upon the point of view, and the religion of a savage may not always commend itself to the cultured twentieth century traveller. Yet none the less it may be a true form of religion. Moreover, a savage is often most unwilling to reveal the secrets of his cult to the first anxious enquirer who comes along armed with a rifle and a list of questions. Like more advanced

religious believers, he is shy of revealing what things lie between the gods and himself, and will

> "not trust his melting soul, save in his Maker's sight."

More patient and more sympathetic investigation has proved that even the lowest savages, Australians and Andaman islanders, have certain religious beliefs of a comparatively high order, which can certainly be proved to be of native growth, and not derived from missionary teaching. Further, go back as far as you will into the dark backward and abysm of time, and still, wherever man has left memorials of himself, these still hint that he had some form of ritual and belief, even in the old stone age. As to his ape-like predecessor we can, of course, say nothing, though an Italian *savant*, Professor Pinsero, has maintained that the higher apes worship serpents. Be that as it may, comparative religion has proved already that man, wherever found and in whatever circumstances placed, is a religious being.

The next service which comparative religion has rendered is to show that in the religious, no less than in other spheres, there has been a gradual progress from lower to higher. There have been many instances of a set-back from a higher to a lower stage, but that is no more than what might have been expected. On the whole, wherever religion has had a fair field, it has shown its

capacity to shake itself free of lower things and to rise to more spiritual heights of vision. Here, of course, we must all admit the influence which men, who have had what may be called a genius for religion, have effected upon the minds of their fellows, raising them out of the lower spheres to the higher, and thus advancing the whole course of religious belief. The cause of this religious genius in them may be explained in different ways, according to the point of view. Here we may assume that it was because they were more accessible than other men to the divine influence upon their souls. Such men were Confucius, Lao Tsze, Zarathushtra, the Hebrew prophets, the Greek philosophers and dramatists. And so far as the great world religions are concerned, Mohammed, Buddha, and Christ are supreme examples of this genius for communicating religious enlightenment to men. The Christian, of course, makes a still higher claim for Christ, yet even from his point of view, he can admit that Christ's religion was not wholly severed from all that had preceded it; in other words, it was the crowning achievement of the long course of religious development. Admitting, then, the influence of the religious genius upon religious evolution, what has this science taught us regarding the nature of that evolution? Hitherto it has been customary with students of comparative

religion to assume that ghost-worship or the cult of spirits in natural objects or some such primitive form, in other words, what is usually called an animistic view of the universe, preceded all other forms. But it is now beginning to be admitted that a stage existed anterior to this animistic or spiritual view. Before man had begun to be an animist, before he had made the discovery of a spirit in himself or had imagined spirits in all parts of nature, in face of which he was ready to bow down and worship, he may have imagined a Being, greater than himself yet like him, a Being who was not envisaged as a spirit, for man as yet knew nothing about spirit. This Being was supposed to have made man and things in man's world, and somehow men may have hoped to go to him after death, while also they may have thought themselves responsible to him for certain actions. Such a Being, of course, need not have had any high divine traits; we are not to regard him as in any sense resembling the God of later monotheism. He was simply a magnified, non-natural man, yet he represented to early men a sufficient divinity, answering to the slight religious impulses now waking and stirring within them. Such a Being is worshipped by the lowest savages, while they certainly do not worship ghosts or spirits of nature.[1] It is, of course, a far

[1] See Lang, *Making of Religion*.

cry from the lowest existing savages to early men, but such an assumption as to early man's religion seems best to explain the fact that savages at a higher stage know of such a high God, but do not worship him. They worship, instead, a host of spirits. If then such a high God was worshipped, why did men cease to worship him? Comparative religion would explain this by the rise of the animistic view of things, whereby man learned that there were such things as spirits in him and all around him. Most usually he feared such spirits: hence it was necessary to placate them in various ways. And as they seemed to come much nearer to his life than the high God, this Being was more and more disregarded, but never quite forgotten. But he was now also conceived as a spiritual Being. Hence, though from one point of view, religion had so far been degraded by animism, in another sense it benefited by the introduction of a spiritual view of the universe. So when spirits became gods and polytheism held the field, this remote divinity may once more have been brought near to men by being merged with the god who eventually became the head of the polytheistic Olympus. Finally, when individuals or tribes or nations set aside their gods many, and lords many, and worshipped One God only, it was still this Being, imagined by early man, who took this high place in their hearts. So this science

teaches us, man sought after and found that God, who is not far from everyone of us.

Again this science enables us, by a careful comparison of different phases of religion with those higher forms which religion has achieved, to discover those elements of truth which lie behind the mass of grotesque or crazy or grovelling or disgusting superstitions, whether of custom or belief, which have sprung up wherever man has been religious. Indeed, both comparative religion and anthropology have shown that, at certain low stages of man's history, it has been precisely those superstitious or those crazy customs which have eventually made for what is best in man's spiritual or social life. For example, the system of tabus, working in both the religious and the social sphere, and to us often perfectly unintelligible, has certainly been a prominent factor in educating the human mind to believe that there were some things which it was not merely unlawful, but absolutely hurtful to do. Similarly, as we have just seen, the animistic theory of the universe has been of immense power in teaching men the nature of spiritual existence. I need not elaborate this point further, as I shall have occasion to refer to it later.

Meanwhile, let us note that comparative religion enables us to estimate what are likely to be the permanent elements in religion. Those things

which are common to all religions, although there may be immense differences in the manner in which men have formulated or believed them, we may assume to have a vital place in the fabric of ultimate religious truth. Eliminate the mere accidentals, strip any universal religious belief of its superstitious or immoral or unscientific wrappings, and we have at least a number of conceptions which we may provisionally assume to be true. And if we see further that they exactly correspond to man's needs and aspirations, the assumption must change into fact. And if we see that any one religion contains all these conceptions in a comparatively pure form, and that it is adapted or has adapted itself to all sorts and conditions of men in all ages and places, then we may further believe that we have reached that form of religion which is likely to be final on this side of time.

There are only three forms of religion which are likely to be singled out as having any claim to this final form: Buddhism, Mohammedanism, Christianity. Mohammedanism we may eliminate, as it certainly owes all that is best in it to Judaism and Christianity, while there is a certain amount of reason in the statement that used often to be made, that it is really a Christian heresy. There is no time to discuss the relative claims of Buddhism and Christianity. I shall here assume

with most students of comparative religion that, quite apart from the truth of Christianity, it embodies in itself in a supremely spiritual form all that is best in other religions. Suffice it to say of Buddhism that, since it does not, in its original and theoretical form, postulate the existence of a God, it is more than doubtful whether it has a claim to rank as a religion at all, while the present working Buddhistic faith certainly falls far behind Christianity as a whole.

Before going on to discuss this claim of Christianity to rank as the highest form of religion, containing all that is best in all that preceded it, to be "the fulness after many foretastes, the substance after many shadows," we may note some varying views of those who, in the past or in the present, have studied religions from a comparative point of view; and have retired from the study with a much less optimistic opinion of religion than is here entertained.

There is, *e.g.* the opinion often maintained before the more strictly scientific study of religions, that all religions, including, of course, Christianity, were equally false and hurtful to the progress of mankind. It is the view which underlies Volney's work, *Les Ruines*, and which Shelley enforced in the most passionate and

exalted verse with all the fervour of an apostle of iconoclasm. Religion is to him a

> "prolific fiend,
> Who peoplest earth with demons, hell with men,
> And heaven with slaves."

Both Volney's and Shelley's views were based upon the theory put forth by Toland in 1696, and adapted by most of the eighteenth century deists and by the *philosophes* of France, that all forms of religion were simply calculating hypocrisies which had been invented by priests in all parts of the world, in order to obtain power over the masses or from some other worse motive. It is needless to say that the theory has received not the slightest confirmation from comparative religion, that though priests have often exploited existing religions for their own private ends, religions existed quite apart from priests, while the people frequently owed it to priests that they taught them knowledge and tried to stamp out superstition. On the other hand, the deists should have remembered that certainly none of the greater religions owed its origin to a priest, but more usually to a layman. Cynics may draw certain conclusions from this fact derogatory to the priesthood, but it offers no support to the theory of eighteenth century philosophers.

On different grounds, however, the theory that all religions are false, is occasionally found among

students of comparative religion, especially those who approach it from the anthropological side. In examining religious beliefs and customs at all stages, but more especially among barbaric peoples and those removed from the state of the lowest savagery, they have perforce to take account of many horrible and grovelling superstitions, of many cruel and disgusting rites by which men have sought to placate "whatever gods there be," or to obtain union with them. Terrors and cruelty, rather than any degree of spiritual insight, are much more in evidence at these stages of religious belief, as is shown by the abject fear which the Red Indian and the Negro exhibit for the spirits which are everywhere about their path, or by the dire tale of human sacrifice so common in all parts of the world, or, again, in higher religions, by the painful ascetic life and the ghastly tortures in which men saw something grateful to the deity, or, once more, in many barbaric and even more civilised religions, the horrible beliefs regarding the punishment of men in the world beyond the grave. Man has endowed his gods with high spiritual qualities, such as he dimly knew himself to possess, but at the same time he has made them in his own image, envisaged them with a low animal nature like his own, making them cruel and lustful and unloveable. What a famous cleric said to a brother theologian,

"Your god is my devil," might truly be applied to the gods of the nations viewed from the point of view just described. Some have therefore come to the conclusion that since we find so much that is cruel and horrible and utterly false among lower religions, they must be quite lacking in any spiritual aspect, and that all forms of religions, even the highest, must be equally false and wrong. Now the reality of spiritual truth, the existence of God and of a spiritual world, must not be measured by man's conceptions of them at lower levels than our own. Because men imagined their gods to be lustful and cruel, we need not suppose that the God we worship is simply a figment of the imagination. Or because their attitude to their gods was too often degraded and superstitious, it does not follow that our more spiritual devotion is simply a more advanced form of superstition. Although rites and beliefs all over the world are crude and material, we must not forget that they did enwrap a spiritual idea or ideas, and that though the outward form is more evident to the eyes of the student, the inner kernel of spiritual truth need not have been absent. The savage, the barbarian desired union with his gods just as truly as does the loftiest Christian saint with God, and if he resorted to superstitious and horrible methods of attaining that union, we must not blame him overmuch or

deny all reality to his desires. The savage, the barbarian sought for God if haply he might feel after Him and find Him Who is not far from every one of us. We ought no more to measure the spiritual side of savage or barbaric religion by its cruel and ghastly rites and beliefs than we would measure the truth of the Christian religion by the S. Bartholomew massacre, or Smithfield fires, or the Inquisition, or persecutions and religious wars innumerable. It does not follow because our ancestors made so many errors of fact and mixed them with their religion, that we should therefore leave off being religious at all. If we turn to other fields of savage activity we shall see how absurd such an attitude would be. Music is the outcome of man's inward sense of the harmony of sound, and it has produced the noblest and most beautiful compositions. But we do not deny its existence or condemn these compositions because the music of the savage is crude and elementary, and to our ears discordant. Again, art is the expression of a certain group of impulses in man which lead him to give them outward form and substance, and have yielded the highest works of the great artists. Still less do we deny the reality of these impulses because savage art is uncouth and grotesque and mechanical. Rather, on the principle of evolution, we see in the musical and artistic productions of the savage,

the first steps in a long connected series which has finally ended in the marvellous creations of the great masters of song and of design. So, in spite of the fact that religious rites and beliefs at lower levels do not commend themselves to us, we must see in them man's halting and ignorant attempts to give expression to the instinct of religion, the spiritual impulse within his soul, an impulse as real and as worthy as the impulses which have produced all art and music and poetry and all knowledge.

We come now to a new criticism of the Christian religion, or rather of certain specific doctrines of Christianity, which is increasingly made by students of this science. Assuming that Christianity is the final form of religion, or at all events, the highest form it has yet attained and that which corresponds most closely to man's needs on this earth, and comparing the chief doctrines which compose it with the beliefs and practices of other faiths, we find many analogies, many points of likeness to these doctrines everywhere. They may be crude in form, they may be superstitious in intention, they are doubtless in many cases mere human inventions or myths. Still there they are, and the question is at once raised,—What is their relation to the doctrines of Christianity, or how are those doctrines affected by the fact that men had already formulated similar ideas for

themselves? Take, for example, the belief in the Incarnation, one of the most specific doctrines of Christianity. Turning to the great fabric of non-Christian religions, we find that the possibility of a god tabernacling for a time in some earthly form, was a thought common to every stage of human belief. In Polynesia the priests are called "god-boxes" because they are supposed to be temporary vehicles of divinity, and this is a belief which is found among many savage peoples. Or where totemism has assumed a religious form, we find that the totem divinity is believed to be incarnate in certain animals of one kind, which form the totem of some particular clan. Or again we have the common belief in a divine priest or divine king, who was the representative or incarnation of a god or a vegetation spirit, and upon whom, by virtue of his divinity, the fertility of the earth depended. The final issue of this belief is perhaps to be seen in the worship of king or emperor as divinity which is found in Babylonia, in Egypt, in ancient Peru, and elsewhere. Or again in Buddhism, we have the idea that the Dalai-Lama is an incarnation of the divinity Amitabha, or in ancient Egypt the belief in the sacred animal which was an incarnation of Osiris. Or we have the Hindu conception of incarnation as witnessed by the avatars of Vishnu, the number of which varies from ten to twenty-eight, now in animal, now in human form. Moreover,

we note in connection with some of these incarnations, and also as a general item of folk-belief all over the world, the belief in the possibility of Virgin birth.

Again, take the Christian belief in Christ's death as an atoning sacrifice for sin, quite apart from the various theories of atonement which have been current at different ages of Christian history. Sacrifice, in one form or another, whether to please or propitiate or to thank the gods or spirits, has been universal save perhaps in the lowest forms of religion. In turn, such forms of sacrifice gave rise to sacrifices of atonement or expiation, in which the victim, most frequently a human being, was substituted either for one or many, or by his death bore away certain evils afflicting the community usually as the result of divine anger. Such sacrifices originated as a result of the belief which Cæsar says was held by the Celts of Gaul, viz., "they consider that, unless man's life be given for man's life, the divinity of the immortal gods cannot be appeased." Savage and barbarian, Semite and Aryan, have known and used such atoning sacrifices. Moreover, where we have the belief in a divine priest or king, the human vehicle of deity, we find that there is some probability that this personage was periodically slain, that this was regarded as a slaying of the god who, however, came to life

again in his successor, and that the purpose of this slaying was, in fact, to give life fuller and freer to men and animals and growing crops. Out of death came life.

Or as a third example, take the Christian belief in the resurrection. The revival of the body after death would seem to have been held in primitive times, otherwise we can hardly explain the persistence of certain things in folk-belief and folk-custom, in which the dead have undoubtedly all that belongs to living and bodily men. The Babylonians may have cherished the belief that the body did not wholly die; the Egyptians almost certainly did so. Hindoos thought of a spiritualised body after death; Parsis believed in a resurrection of the body, and the Celts held that after death the spirit assumed another bodily form. But besides such a general belief in future bodily existence, there was also a whole series of myths regarding the death and resurrection, or, at all events, the revival, of a divine being. Both in Oriental and in Greek religions, and possibly elsewhere also, myth told how this divine being had been slain and had been restored to life. Both these events were the recurring subjects of ritual and dramatic representation; the death was the subject of deep lamentation, the restoration was the cause of deep rejoicing. Arising, perhaps ultimately from the idea of the death of the spirit

of vegetation and its subsequent revival with the growing crops in spring, these phenonema are seen in the various but similar cults of Adonis, of Thammuz, of Attis, of Osiris, of Dionysos, of Persephone.

Taking such well-nigh universal beliefs as these, certain students of comparative religion maintain that since they are simply man's inventions, the specific Christian beliefs in Incarnation, Atonement, and Resurrection, which they so much resemble, are equally fictitious beliefs which have accumulated around the personality of the founder of Christianity. More especially with regard to those cults in which myth and ritual spoke of a god slain, and then rising again, or in connection with which the god's human incarnation or representative was actually slain and his powers and divinity at once passed on to his successor, it has been maintained that these three Christian doctrines owe much to those cults which embodied such beliefs and practices. In other words, historic Christianity, in so far as it centres in the three facts of the Incarnation, the Death, and the Resurrection of Christ, owes much to the mythology and ritual of the slain god and the divine being of these various cults.

There is no time to take up the question of how far this influence of these cults upon the doctrines of Christianity is historically possible;

suffice it to say that there is no evidence that such a myth and ritual existed among the Jews of Christ's day, and that it is extremely unlikely that His Jewish disciples would be influenced by cults which they abhorred, to form a Christ legend in accordance with the myth and ritual of those cults. Here it seems that Dr Frazer, who, in his great work, *The Golden Bough*, exploits this theory, has shown a singular lack of historical perspective and also of critical acumen in forcing a number of extremely doubtful pieces of evidence to fit his preconceived opinions. Any one reading his third volume, in which he applies the whole theory of the slain god to explain how the ethical mission of Christ obtained the character of a divine revelation which culminated in the Passion and death of the Incarnate Son of a heavenly Father, must feel how inadequate the supposed cause is to account for such a stupendous effect. He must also see that there is not a scrap of evidence that the Jews had a yearly festival in which two divine incarnations, a Father and a Son, played their parts, the Son being put to death to save the life of his Divine Father. These two persons are said to have been, mythically, Mordecai and Haman. Haman was put to death; Mordecai survived; and each year this was re-enacted. The Divine Son, however, came to be called Barabbas; but the Jews at last became confused, and applied the

name Barabbas, not to the representative of the slain god, but to the god whose representative survived. Finally, by an accident, the place of the Divine Son was thrust upon Christ, the ethical teacher, who thus came to be regarded as actually what had been claimed for Him in festival play. The series of assumptions upon which the whole argument rests is so patent to the eye, the different positions which the argument occupies at different times are so evidently contradictory of each other, that it is well-nigh incredible that any serious student of religion could bring forward such a chain of reasoning as an explanation of Christianity. Indeed, if the subject involved were not so sacred, one would be inclined to laugh at the misapplied ingenuity of the author. But Dr Frazer's ingenious arguments throughout the whole of his work rest too often upon mere assumptions for him to be regarded as having said the final word upon the origins of Christianity, or, for that matter, upon the origins of religion.

But, taking the likeness of pagan myths, rites, and customs, to those specific Christian doctrines as a whole, or again to the Christian belief in sin, or inspiration, or the future life, we find that there is likeness in unlikeness. We may compare, but we are bound also to contrast. No one can candidly approach the pagan parallels to Christian beliefs without seeing that there is a vast differ-

ence between the two groups. The latter are symbolic of a whole background of spiritual and ethical truth; they are suffused with a spirituality which, though not utterly wanting in their pagan prototypes, is certainly buried beneath a mass of material wrappings, and this alone should make us pause before classing them finally with these pagan beliefs as just so many human suppositions with no real basis of fact. No one can compare, *e.g.*, the incarnations of Vishnu with those of Christ without being aware of a different spiritual atmosphere. No one again can take the myth and ritual of the slain and restored gods and compare them with the ideas associated with the Death and Resurrection of Christ, without seeing that in the latter case we are moving on an entirely different and a higher plane of thought. They have a wealth of ethical and spiritual meaning which is quite unobscured, and which is hardly to be found in the myth and ritual which is supposed to have given rise to them. And this is true of these doctrines when we first encounter them in Christian theology. They are not doctrines which, after many centuries, have been at last stripped of all materialistic wrappings and finally given an ethical and spiritual form. They have that form from the very first. If they owed anything to the cult of the slain and restored god, they succeeded instantly in transforming all that

was crude and material in that cult into something intensely spiritual. Wherein lay the power which caused this transformation? This is left entirely unexplained, or those who maintain the theory shut their eyes to the spiritual aspect of these Christian beliefs altogether.

But is no other view possible? Must we, on the strength of these numerous and world-wide parallels to Christian doctrines, at once throw the latter aside, discarding their historic background, and so deprive Christianity of its position as the absolute religion? May we not rather take all the religious beliefs which find a parallel in the Christian creed as foreshadowing, and to some extent preparing the hearts of mankind for it? In other words the religious ideas into which men had put so much meaning, but which had so far forth no background of reality, at last found fulfilment in actual fact, in the things which lie behind the historic creed of Christendom. This view takes nothing from Christianity, while it gives a greater value to many beliefs and customs of world-wide extent, even such as seem cruel and superstitious, and shows that men were everywhere seeking for what they instinctively felt would best assist and also explain their lives. Thus the likeness of so many pagan to Christian beliefs would not be the result of mere accident, nor would it mean that both were equally false.

There is something more in them than can be accounted for by "the web of being blindly wove by man." They suggest that God at no time left Himself without witness, but in divers parts and in many manners led mankind on to the Christ who was to be. He was watching over the religious beliefs of men, and though there was so much of the human element in them, so much that to our view is superstitious and irrational, there also was the seed of the divine sowing. The beliefs in incarnation, in revelation, in sin, in the value of sacrifice, in a god dying for men, in resurrection, in immortality, were just so many lines leading up to that religion which is based upon the belief in One who was incarnate, for us men and for our salvation, who revealed to us the Father, who taught us the true nature of sin, who died, and whose death was to be of endless efficacy to all generations of men, who rose again, and who brought life and incorruption to light by His Gospel. While the time of that full revelation was yet far off, men were everywhere working their way towards it, and God was preparing them for it. The universality of those ideas we have just spoken of, even if there were mingled with them much that is gross and offensive, suggests a preparation of mankind for Christianity. The myths and representations of suffering and dying gods, reviving after the touch of death, may

have had little spiritual and ethical meaning to the pagan mind, yet they must to some extent have served to show that these gods had entered into the arena of conflict where humanity suffered and died, and that they could not be indifferent to human fate. They witnessed to the need of divine help and example, and doubtless they helped to prepare the minds of many for the Christian view of the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ.

They who can take a wide and generous view of God's purposes for humanity will therefore be glad to trace in all these ideas a seed of truth preserved until the time should come that it might blossom and bear much fruit. "The soul of the wide world dreaming of things to come" gave outward expression to those ideas, and the dream at last found fulfilment in the Christian faith. So we may say with Tennyson—

> "There is light in all,
> And light, with more or less of shade, in all
> Man-modes of worship."

Or going further back to S. John's thought of Christ as the true light who lighteth every man that cometh into the world, we may say that no religious belief is without some spark of that eternal radiance.

The fact that Christianity, which claims to be a revealed religion, has much in common with the

beliefs, rites, and customs of natural religion everywhere, is frequently made a matter of ridicule of that claim to revelation, especially by men of the evolutionary school. They expect that a revealed religion must be something apart, must have no connection with anything which ever preceded it. It must obliterate all former beliefs, and must supersede them by absolutely and hitherto unknown conceptions. This argument seems unworthy of an evolutionist, and it is one which could hardly ever be made by a Christian. If, as we believe, God has helped men to realise Him more fully, it could only be by leading them along the lines upon which their religious development was already proceeding. He taught them truth by making use of methods—beliefs and rites, with which they were already familiar. He did not present them with conceptions with which they were up till then absolutely unfamiliar. Had He done so, how could they ever have understood them? Rather, the conceptions of revelation, while transcending all that had gone before, were not out of touch with them. The truths of revelation by no means gave the lie to the blind gropings of natural religion. Men had worshipped out of their blindness, but their instinct was a true one, and at last the scales fell from their eyes, and they saw themselves in possession of a religion which certainly superseded the faiths

of the past, but only in so far as it transcended them.

We may say then of all such beliefs that they are instinctive attempts at realising what was one day to be given to men fully and freely from the divine side, that upon them the fabric of Christian belief could found itself, and that Christianity may therefore claim to be the answer to the hopes and longings of paganism, as it sought with a patience that is pathetic for the truth which would make it free. The beliefs of paganism were crude and partial and mixed up with much error and superstition. Christianity presents all these beliefs free from those things, in the highest ethical and spiritual form, and welded into a complete system which fully answers to every need of the human soul. No other religion ever presented such a purview of the things which are most longed for in the hearts of men, or promised an eternal and clear grasp of the things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard. Thus it explains the religions which have gone before it, and so from the point of view of religious growth we may regard it as the highest stage in a long series of religious developments, yet owing its supremacy to the nature and Person of its Founder.

As the dim guesses of the astrologers at last resulted in the science of astronomy; as the fanciful experiments of the alchemists at last

resulted in the science of chemistry, so we may say that the guesses and fancies of the soul of man regarding God and things divine at last found fulfilment in the Christian religion. Men strove, guided by the divine idea, after what was one day to be historical fact. Here is the value of this view of the comparative method with reference to the Christian faith. Though making Christianity absolute and final, it does not dismiss all others as false: it admits the truth in them. Religions have passed away, religion itself never dies; it slowly arrives at its perfect form. We need not regret their disappearance, since "the one remains, the many change and pass." Their task of preparation was done, their time of teaching the nations had come to an end. The one religion has taken their place, and has preserved whatsoever things in them were true, just, pure, and of good report. Moreover, examining all religions from this point of view, we find that Christianity sums up in itself in one perfect form all their leading and dominant ideas, putting each in its proper setting, and purifying each of its grosser elements. For example, the nothingness of life compared with the infinite existence of God is the chief note of Hindu religion. Christianity lays stress on this, but balances it with the thought of life as an arena of activity where evil may be conquered by good. Buddhism lays stress on

the need of redemption, but it makes it far off and impracticable; Christianity brings redemption near to every human being. Confucianism is dominated by the conception of a moral life rather than by a spiritual ideal. Christianity is also a system of ethics, but it knows that morality must be touched with spiritual emotion, that emotion which springs from a disinterested love to God. The religion of Lao Tsze pointed above all things to the reign of law. Our Lord made this one of the fundamental doctrines of His revelation. But to Him law was not impersonal, it was the thought of God unfolding itself in action: it was God Himself as the supporter and guide of the universe. Zoroastrianism, and, to a less degree, the religion of Scandinavia, looked upon life as the scene of the great struggle between good and evil. They knew of sin as a great enemy, but looked forward to the future triumph of good. Christ also calls His disciples to a conflict. He taught us the true nature of sin, but He did not think of it as an actual existence warring ever against good. It was rather the perversion of the will, and He came to set men's wills free. But He also invited all men to work with Him in the task, and He, too, looked forward to the triumph of His cause. Thus we might pursue the leading thought of every religion and find it taken up and glorified in Christianity. Within the radius of its influence

each of these religions changed permanently the conditions of man's existence as a spiritual being. Each one opened a door in a vast temple through which its followers might enter and worship. But when we pass from them to Christianity we see how near and yet how far it is from every one of them. Christ threw all these little doors into one vast portal when He said to humanity, "I am the Way." Christianity combines all that is best in other faiths, yet it is not a mere eclectic religion. It has overpassed them all, it has combined into one, so that we cannot see the lines of union, all the truths which had gone before through Him who is the Truth. Christianity is not the mere fusion of many varying doctrines, borrowed from other faiths, into one. It is itself a living and organic whole, not forgetful of the past, but answering to the varied aspirations of bygone ages and ancient creeds.

This is not to say, of course, that every human interpretation of the historic faith of Christianity is equally valuable and permanent. Dogmatic systems based upon it must have their day and cease to be. A comparative study of Christian dogmas leaves little room for doubt that in shaping them men did borrow more or less from pagan modes of thought, from things expressed in pagan beliefs. This, *e.g.*, is true of much that has been taught regarding the atonement and regarding the

future life. The Church as a whole has never laid down any complete theory of the atonement, but individual theologians and schools of thought have not been slow to do so, and have undoubtedly borrowed much from the most primitive and revolting pagan ideas concerning sacrifice to an angry God. The value of the atonement is seen in the way in which it has answered to man's direst needs, but we shall probably never quite grasp, much less exhaust its meaning on this side of time. Though it is the fulfilment of pagan beliefs concerning sacrifice and the slain God, we must not explain it only according to these beliefs: it has a much richer and fuller meaning. Similarly with the future life. Our Lord said little regarding it. But that little was full of hope, and pointed to the great future as one of continuous purification, of education, of insight, of union with God. But the merest acquaintance with the eschatology of the ancient world will show us where theologians, misinterpreting hints laid down in Scripture, obtained the material with which they elaborated a great system of the last things and formulated the ghastly and repellent doctrines of eternal punishment and unending hell. These examples will show us that though the historic foundations of the creed cannot change, our human interpretations of them have not the same permanence. We must enlarge our interpretations

of them to suit human needs as these vary from age to age. And here the science of comparative religion will teach us to discard whatever things in Christian theology are akin to the temporal, the superstitious, the crude in all pre-Christian faiths. As a science, theology has, in the past, been too much a matter of abstract conceptions. It is becoming increasingly clear that without abandoning the eternal foundations of our creed, it must take into account many factors, must sweep the whole horizon of life, and must not confine its outlook to a scholar's study, away from the highway where the busy human current sweeps along.

Finally such a view of comparative religion in its relation to Christianity teaches us that we need not distress ourselves regarding religious origins, whatever these may prove to have been. We may be quite sure that however religion first began, and doubtless like man himself it had a lowly beginning, it was not a mere illusion nor a pursuit of shadows. At every moment of its growth God was with it, and though the divine leading may often have been foiled by human error, it could not ultimately fail of its result. We do not despise morality although we know that moral ideas have had a long and devious history, and have often begun with the narrowest possible field of action. Man arrived at ethical conceptions of purity, of goodness, of kindness,

and so on, very gradually, and often we must seek these beginnings in customs and restrictions which to us have scarcely any ethical content at all. Similarly, the products of man's intellect or imagination are none the less valuable although of human shaping, and although in their beginning they appear to us contemptible. Thus man's religious aspirations, be they what they may, can never be wholly void and unmeaning to him who has a true conception of the comparative method of religion. They reveal man as at all stages of his history the seeker after God, pursuing his quest through many dark and devious ways, arriving often at places which seemed to bar all further progress, yet never relinquishing the quest. Some may say that he was merely pursuing a phantom; but on the other hand when we think of what religion has achieved for man, when we regard the religious aspirations of great and holy souls wherever found, when we look upon religion as a key which, better than any other, unlocks the mysteries of human life, we must acknowledge that the quest was not in vain, that if man pursued a phantom it was at least one which was his friend, which did comfort and enlighten his soul, and give him a peace which the world could not give. And of this phantom which proved to be man's friend, we may say in Browning's words—

"What if this friend happen to be God?"

COMPARATIVE RELIGION AND THE RELIGION OF JESUS, by the Rev. P. A. GORDON CLARK, Perth.

COMPARATIVE RELIGION AND THE RELIGION OF JESUS

I. A Sketch of the Growth of the Science of Religion

The earliest glimpse which science gives us of our race shows us men living in little groups or herds, each on its own bit of land, and in communion with a number of spirits. How this state of matters had arisen was a question men, at that period, never asked; it was accepted as part of the order of nature that each group should have its own spirits, and therefore its own religion, as it had its own land or its own language. When the groups became nations, the portions of land a national territory, and the spirits national gods—a nation, its land, and its religion were still considered a unity; to be connected with one was to be associated with all, to forsake one was to leave all. Ruth[1] said to Naomi, "Where you dwell I will dwell, your people shall be my people, and your gods my gods." Jeremiah is horror stricken at the bare idea of Israel forsaking Jehovah, and exclaims,[2]

[1] Ruth i. 6. [2] Jer. ii. 10, 11.

"Pass over to the islands of Kittim, and see; and send to Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there hath been such a thing. Hath a nation changed its gods?" A traveller and thinker like Herodotus might try to learn something of the religion of other lands, but the profession of a distinct religion by each nation was apparently so right and natural that it never dawned even on him to ask why or how.[1]

The isolation of the Mediterranean nations, partially destroyed by conquests like those of Alexander, was terminated by their inclusion in the Roman Empire. This caused the conception that each nation must have its own religion to give place to four ways of looking at the problem of different religions.

1. Syncretism. Men identified the gods in whom they believed with the new ones they had come to know.[2]

[1] The advent of Christianity, the universal religion, caused the idea of national religions to pass into that of national Churches. "The sixth century gave strong proofs of the necessity that each country which possessed a language and literature should possess also its national Church" (Finlay, *Greece under the Romans*, iii. 10). The idea of national Churches still survives in Protestantism.

[2] Cæsar (*B. G.* vi. 17) and Tacitus (*Ger.* 9) identify the gods of Rome with those of Gaul, and the Gauls raised altars to the gods of their conquerors. Herodotus (ii. 50, 145) identifies the gods of Greece with those of Egypt. Apuleius (*Met.* xi.) identifies Isis with a number of female divinities. Oriental and Egyptian worships were gathered together in the cult of Isis but specially in that of Mithra, "the greatest effort of syncretism to absorb without extinguishing the

2. Scepticism. Men who had lost faith in their own religion scorned that of their neighbour, hence the various cults "considered by the people as equally true, and by the magistrates as equally useful, were considered by the philosophers as equally false."[1]

3. Investigation. Some few men like Plutarch[2] and Lucian[3] seriously studied the religions of other nations, but the impossibility of scientific investigation and the lack of anything like a proper method made such attempts abortive. These three finally gave way to

4. Proselytism. This finds its first expression in the work of an unknown Jew, whom the idea that Jehovah was not a national deity but the only god, had led to the further thought that Jehovah's religion could not be for a nation but for men. He tried, by

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gods of the classic pantheon in a cult which was almost monotheistic" (Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, p. 585.) See note on page 124 and page 126.

[1] Gibbon, ii. 1. "The toleration of the Roman Empire rested more on contempt than upon the respect due from society to the freedom of individual opinion" (Milman's note to Gibbon, chap. ii.)

[2] Plutarch in the *De Is.* attempts an explanation of the Egyptian religion. He says four explanations have been given, and he adds his own, dealing specially with the zoolatry and the vestments, which is as fantastic as the others.

[3] See *De Syria Dea.*

throwing his newly found truth into the form of a story (which we call the Book of Jonah), to inspire his co-religionists to propagate their faith by showing them the certainty of its acceptance by the Gentiles. From that day Judaism began to "compass sea and land to make one proselyte." Other Eastern faiths were roused into a similar enthusiasm.

From the heart of Judaism there emerged a new faith, the religion of Jesus, devoid of ritual, with "the promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come," supremely ethical, and intensely aggressive. This finally became supreme. Its triumph is marked by the passing of proselytism into persecution. Official Christianity, the religion of Jesus as embodied in the Roman Church, viewed all other religions as false,[1] and their devotees as eternally lost. The Jews, and at a later period the Mohammedans, were assailed with plunder and persecution. This method of looking at and dealing with the adherents of other religions prevailed throughout the Middle Ages, and was little altered by either the Reformation or the Renaissance.

By the middle of the seventeenth century

[1] As to the question whether Paul regarded the heathen gods as Demons, see Dods, *Expositor*, fifth series, vol. i. p. 237; Whitehouse, in Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, i. p. 594; Ramsay, *Expositor*, sixth series, iii. p. 437.

a new era began to dawn. A growing and widening intercourse with foreign lands made known to scholars many new religions. Alexander Ross in his *Pansebeia*,[1] gave a view of all the religions in the world, and in it we detect intolerance passing into enquiry. This knowledge of other faiths came to men when official Christianity was being keenly attacked and as keenly defended. The combatants had to deal with the fresh facts. The defenders of Christianity had been maintaining that God gave to man, at his creation, a divine revelation. Through Judaism this had attained its final and perfect form in the teaching of Jesus, which, said they, we profess and possess. But from a very early date, men began to overlay this revelation with superstitions, which grew into religions, and these, said they, are the religions now becoming known. On the other hand the opponents of the Churches and of dogma had been maintaining that religion was an invention of clerics, and was upheld by them to retain power over the masses.[2] These new religions

[1] ΠΑΝΣΕΒΕΙΑ: *or, a View of all the Religions in the World*, by Alexander Ross, fourth edition, London, 1672. This curious volume gives in the form of question and answer a good idea of all that was then known of the various religions.

[2] This theory may be said to be as old as Polybius who "regarded religion as the device of statesmen to control the masses by mystery and terror" (Polybius vi. 56, quoted by Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, p. 531).

were, they said, similar inventions by kindred priests. The former view has held its ground down to quite a recent date. The other theory that all religions are priestly inventions was formulated by Toland,[1] modified by Picard,[2] and received its finest and bitterest expression in the writings of Voltaire, whose detestation of priests was only matched by his hatred of fanatics. As the different religions became better known, it was seen that the priest was never the inventor, but rather the preserver and modifier of religious rites and ideas, and that to say the priest invented religion only raised the question who invented the priest?

The promise of a better theory appears in *Origine de tous les Cultes ou Religion Universelle*, (1795), in which Charles Dupuis maintained that all religions sprung from a primitive nature worship. Throughout the nineteenth century three new factors began to make their influence felt on the study of religions.

1. The conception that in religion not the outward rite, but the idea which it embodies, is the important thing. Herder first pointed this out and indicated that the task before

[1] J. Toland, in *Christianity not Mysterious*, 1696, speaks of the Clergy as "the sole contrivers of those inconceivable or mysterious doctrines which I also maintain are as advantageous to themselves as they are prejudicial to the laity."

[2] *The Ceremonies and Religious Customs of the Various Nations of the Known World*, B. Picard, Amsterdam, 1723; London, 1733.

scholars was to ascertain clearly what these ideas were, to account for their origin and trace their development; while Hegel said these ideas had grown, that in their growth an order could be detected, and that the growth was upwards, towards truth.[1]

2. The spirit of tolerance leading men like Carlyle[2] and Maurice[3] to endeavour to understand religions other than their own, and to see and state the truths contained in them.
3. Research, including enquiry into the religion of primitive man, excavations in Egypt and other lands, the study of the religions of savages, the critical examination of various religions like those of India, and the investigations of psychologists into the religious nature of man.

The result of these and other influences are seen in innumerable volumes dealing with the different departments of the science of religion, in the foundation of chairs for its study in universities so far apart as those of Manchester and

[1] Spinoza, in his *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* (1670), treats Christianity as a development of the leading ideas of Judaism. Something like an effort to trace a line of development is seen in Lessing's *Education of the Human Race* (1780), though Lessing like Spinoza, deals only with Judaism and Christianity.

[2] Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes and Hero-Worship* (1840).

[3] F. D. Maurice, *The Religions of the World* (1846).

Tokio, and in the strenuous endeavour of scholars to understand and trace the history of the development of religion.

II. A Sketch of the Evolution of Religion

The new facts being daily discovered, the new arrangements and classifications of these being suggested, the new theories being proclaimed, the extent of the material to be assimilated, the intricacy and delicacy of the problems, the sacredness of the subject, touching, as it does, what is highest in man and holiest in God, the personal interests involved, the prejudices which have to be overcome by thinkers however "free," all conspire to make an earnest man learn carefully, and speak guardedly on this the youngest and highest of the sciences. Still if religion has developed it must have grown in some way, and I venture to endeavour to indicate the way in which it appears most likely that religion has from low beginnings moved upwards and onwards.

In every individual, religion begins as an inheritance. A child learns the language its parents speak, and accepts the religion they profess. Experience causes each generation to modify, more or less, the inherited faith, the forms which embody it, and the worship which expresses it. The religion thus inherited and modified, the child

passes on to his descendants, who in turn change it and transmit the product to their descendants.

What is true of the individual is true of the race. Inheritance, modification, and survival were and are the means which preserve, purify, and transmit religion. Through the action of the first, religion ever lives. Through the second it becomes less superstitious, more rational, more helpful, because it trains the best men to receive the "something higher still" which it has ever to offer them. Attention to the third law enables us to trace the upward progress of religion. No story can compare in interest with that which tells how through dim dawnings of conscience, and feeble feelings after something above and beyond, the Father came into direct touch with men, how to selected souls and through them to others, He gradually disclosed more and more of His character, till finally He could and did reveal Himself in His Son. The story moves through four great divisions.

The first opens by showing us man in his infancy, appearing like the babe, more animal than spiritual In primitive man reason, culture, morality, and religion *are*, but are primitive, in *posse* because in *esse*. Man is by nature religious.[1] Religion is not a thing which he discovered or invented, not

[1] "So far as I can judge from the immense mass of accessible evidence, we have to admit that the belief in spiritual beings appears among all low races with whom we have attained a thoroughly intimate acquaintance." Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Animism*.

even something which he came gradually to possess, but something which from the time he was man possessed him: it is inherent and natural. In primitive man we see religion not beginning, but beginning to grow. How religious feeling was first stirred into conscious life, and began to express itself in what might be called worship, we can only dimly guess, because all that experience lies beyond the horizon of history, for as Lang says, "The origin of a belief in God is beyond the ken of history and speculation." Investigators who believe with Rousseau that man's advance began by his "animating all things whose action he felt" have pictured primitive man as living in little herds,[1] a being highly neurotic,[2] nervously alive to all things round him. Motion in any form attracted his attention, the motion of his fellows, of the beasts, of the river, the trees, the winds, and the planets. Motion he only knew as the result of will, his motion of his will, their motion of their will. Hence there was in everything, even in things *he* did not see actually moving, a spirit like his own. This thought was confirmed by his dreams, which taught him that he had a spirit able to leave the body, hold intercourse (as he thought) with other spirits, and then return to the body.[3]

[1] Bagehot's phrase is "Co-operative groups."

[2] Bagehot, *Physics and Politics*, p. 55.

[3] "The dreams of men peopled heaven with gods." Lucr. Book V.

The occurrence of the unexpected, the irregular, the opposite of what had been planned, the mysterious, and the unaccountable, impressed men with the idea that these spirits had superhuman power, and that in a sense they were extranatural beings. Naturally a desire arose in the different groups of men to get into friendly relations with such very desirable allies.[1] But how was this to be done? Take the case of animals. Men could not help observing that animals,[2] like themselves, were in groups. Each member of such a group was animated by a spirit for "the sense of an absolute psychical distinction between man and beast, so prevalent in the civilised world, is hardly to be found among the lower races."[3] The human herd was (or was believed to be) of one blood and held together by this blood tie. Primitive man imagined that a group of animals were held together by a similar blood connection. A stranger was admitted into a human group by the blood of a representative of the group being put on or into him. So a representative of an animal group, with whom alliance was desired, was chosen as the representative of a group of spirits, and on it was poured the blood of one of the human herd, so that all the animals became members of the human herd, and *vice versa*; the two groups

[1] "Fear first made the gods." Petronius, c. xiii.

[2] This is also true of plants.

[3] Tylor, *Primitive Culture: Animism*, pp. 469, 500.

became one, and man gained as friends a group of spirits. This group of friendly spirits could be angered or estranged, and then, as well as at other special times, the blood covenant had to be renewed, by *e.g.* the killing, the mingling of the blood, and the eating of a member either of the human or the animal group. Here is the beginning of sacrifice and of worship. At first these spirits were thought of as confined to their own thing, or to departments of nature, and they had only general names, generic attributes, no life history, and were worshipped mainly by magical rites. When the groups grew into clans these totem spirits became the spirits of the clan. Gradually the spirits which in experience were found to be least powerful, were less and less reverenced, and the more powerful obtained individual names, personal attributes, finally a life history, with domains more clearly defined, and there came into the worship elements of propitiation: these spirits became gods. Only one out of many groups of spirits had been admitted into a human group, those left unattached were hostile, so while the friendly spirits became gods, the unfriendly rather acquired the character of demons. In course of time other ideas were developed from this conception of spirits. When *e.g.* a person died there was left a mouldering body and a homeless spirit. Fear or love led to the offering of food to the

spirit, and burial to the dead, and hence arose the worship of ancestors and conceptions of a life beyond death.[1] Each of the heavenly bodies was also the abode of a spirit, and to all these adoration was also given. Certain things were thought of as sacred because connected with the spirits. Involuntary fasting, the solitude and danger of the time, ceaseless watchfulness, restless expectancy, and actual occurrences intensified devotion to these spirits in certain men who thus gradually became, in such matters, the religious leaders of the group in which they lived — priests. Similarly arose the primitive ideas of sacred places, sanctuaries; sacred clothes, still surviving in the idea of a Sunday coat and hat; sacred times from which we have our holidays and holy days; forbidden acts from which have been evolved many of our social customs, conceptions of crime, and criminal jurisprudence; certain fit or unfit states of approaching the spirits, whence sprang our conceptions of holiness; and certain modes of communicating with the spirits, from which have grown gifts, prayer, and praise.

Different groups of men may have gone through experiences different from these, or similar experiences in a different order, but the rough sketch just given makes it possible for us to see,

[1] "Religion began when the living thought seriously of the dead," Herbert Spencer.

how in these or other ways, the earlier generations of men received a training suited to their capacity, and were by it prepared for higher teaching, for as some one has said, "In every age God took man as he was, to make him better than he was." In some such ways there was awakened in man a consciousness of the divine; of the divine as above, distinct from, and yet near him; as powerful to help or hinder; and as capable of anger, but anger that could be appeased. Such truths engraven on the mind of the race at the most impressionable age, entered deeply into its very lifeblood, and their influence has never faded. The effort to understand them, to give better answers to the questions they raise, to find adequate expression for the thoughts they stirred, to solve the difficulties they start, and to understand better the being or beings of which they spoke, have been the moving forces which led men to see truth more clearly, to long for further and further light, to welcome it when it came, and thus to move forward to the goal. It is thus evident that during these ages "God left not Himself without witness." Though His children were but in their infancy the Father was with them, communicating to them, as they were fit to receive, the elements of religious truth, which became the preparation for and the foundation of the great Racial Religions. These form the subject of the next chapter in the story.

The second division describes how groups of men began to hive off from the parent home into the regions beyond. The new environment in which each group found itself, told upon its life. The common inheritance gradually acquired in each distinct and separate characteristics. Mankind passed into distinct races, the features approximated to racial types, speech evolved into languages, while in religion old beliefs and practises assumed other forms, new conceptions arose, old ones faded, and thus religion began to pass into distinct types of religion. Religions are mortal, but religion never dies. To trace the history of all these racial religions, such as the Aryan, Turanian, etc., would be impossible. Let us select one which is for us of peculiar interest, the Semitic. The earliest home of the Semites[1] known to us was Arabia, and there the environment suggested higher thoughts on religion.[2] Ruskin,[3] in a discussion on the relation of climate and land to art speaks of "the sand lands, including the desert, and dry rock plains as inhabited generally by a nomad population, capable of high mental cultivation, and of solemn monumental or religious art,

[1] For their distinctive racial features see Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. v. p. 72; Sayce's *Races of the Old Testament;* Charles M. Doughty's *Travels in Arabia Deserta.*

[2] See such books as *The Religion of the Semites*, W. Robertson Smith; *Sketches from Eastern History*, Theodor Nöldeke; *A Sketch of Semitic Origins*, G. A. Barton; M'Curdy in *H. D. B.*, v. p. 83.

[3] *Modern Painters*, v. p. 138.

but not of art in which pleasurableness forms a large element." Historical research has shown that this generalisation touching art may be extended to life. The early Semites in their desert home acquired a seriousness that was almost sombre, and life became touched with a grave thoughtfulness distinct from the indifference or the joyous carelessness of other races. The intense solitude and loneliness of the desert intensified the neurotic temperament, and the Semite became alive to every movement, sound, and sight which broke the monotony of the desert. They felt, as all who have lived in the desert have felt, the overmastering influence of what we call physical forces, but what they thought of as the gods who lived in these, and made them instruments for accomplishing their will. These rude children of the desert believed strongly in the direct action of these deities, and so constantly appealed to them for help to attain desired good, or avert dreaded evil. The power of the deities, thus exhibited, deepened the reverence of the devotees, strengthened their religiousness, gave a higher seriousness to life, and made more awful and more distant the ancestral gods. The gods were not considered either as omnipotent or eternal. They were limited by Magic, by the rights of each other, and by their natures, for they were subject to

death, and death meant separation from this world and control over the men and things in it. The displays of power by the gods, like similar displays by men caused comparisons to be made between the gods, which resulted in certain deities being thought of as stronger than others. The feeling also that certain deities were specially helpful in certain spheres and in certain directions would also arise. Circumstances may indeed have forced men to compare the gods ethically, as beings having each a moral character, and the god who seemed to them to occupy the highest place morally would win the allegiance of the higher type of men. Hence the stronger, the more helpful, the more moral deities gradually won the allegiance of increasing numbers, whose intenser faith again tended to exalt their god above the others.[1] In all the national cults which sprung from the Semitic religion, as those of the Babylonians, Assyrians, etc., this tendency was exhibited sometimes in Kathenotheism (the conception of one God behind various forms); in Henotheism (the supremacy of one among many gods); and even in a Monolatry (the worship of one god with the belief in many), so pronounced as sometimes to be mistaken for Monotheism.[2]

[1] This tendency to Monotheism is well exhibited in Chaps. II. and III. of Macculloch's *Comparative Theology*.

[2] The tendency is seen in the exaltation of Bel in Babylon, Asshur

The extent and salubrity of Arabia[1] made it the cradle, as its sterility prevented it becoming the home, of a vast population. Scarcity habitually compelled its inhabitants to pass into the neighbouring fertile lands, sometimes as peaceful settlers, sometimes in a torrent of humanity which nothing could resist.[2] Thus the Semites, who were never an organised nation, but merely unorganised tribes, easily split into nations.

Influences similar and different operated on the other great races, and when *e.g.* the Aryan race developed into nations, such as the Greeks, Romans, Germans, etc., each evolved a religion in some respects similar and in others very different from that of its kindred. But it will tend to clearness if we follow the fortune of a branch of the Semitic race.

The third division therefore concerns a section of the Semites who emigrated—sometime previous to B.C. 4000—from Arabia to the lowlands of Mesopotamia, mingling there with men, the Sumero-

in Assyria, and specially of Aten by Amen-hetep IV. For this latter see the histories of Egypt as that of Budge, iv. p. 120. See note, p. 12 and p. 16.

[1] See Flinders Petrie, *Expositor*, sixth series, vol. xii. p. 148.

[2] There was an Aramean exodus about B.C. 1500; the Nabatean expansion about B.C. 500; the Mahomedan deluge about A.D. 662; and the more recent emigration of the Shammai and Anezeh clans. See L. B. Paton's *Early History of Syria and Palestine;* Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. i. p. 134, vol. v. p. 73; Prof. G. A. Smith in the *Quarterly Statement*, Palestine Exploration Fund, 1906, p. 74.

Akkadians, belonging to a non-Semitic race.[1] A great advance often takes place when the culture of one race is fertilised by that of another. The rise of Greek civilisation from the mingling of the Hellenic Achæans with the primitive Pelasgi,[2] the advent of Christianity into the Græco-Roman world, the arrival of the scholars of Constantinople in Western Europe in the fifteenth century, are well-known examples of the law. The culture, commonly called Babylonian, springing from the fusion of these two races, was essentially Semitic. The petty tribe, with its chief, gradually expanded into a city-kingdom, with its king or priest-king, and each developed its inherited culture and religion according to its particular environment. One of the earliest founded of these cities was Eridu, and its primitive, or at least one of its earliest cults, was that which centered round the god Ea, the god of wisdom and culture, of justice and kindness to men. He had such titles as "Father," "King of Righteousness," "I am." Ea became identified with Sin, the moon god, a god important to nomads like the Semites who frequently travel by night. Ea in all probability

[1] This is the opinion of a majority of scholars including Jastrow, Hommel, etc., but a minority including Halévy contend that the Babylonian culture was entirely Semitic. See Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, vol. v. p. 536. M'Curdy thinks that the Semites had as "neighbours a race akin to the Elamites or Kassites" (Hastings, as above, p. 86).

[2] See H. R. Hall's *Oldest Civilization of Greece*.

is the same as Aa, or Ya and identical with Ya (יָהּ) the equivalent of Yahveh (Jehovah).[1] This does not solve the mystery of the origin of Jehovah, for its first usage and primary sense are unknown. An old form אֶהְיֶה used in Exodus iii. 14, "I am," survived down to the time of Hosea (i. 9). But apart from conjecture, or even the discovery of the name, it is clear that Jehovah was a Babylonian deity, long before Israel as a nation existed. His seat being Sinai it is probable that originally he was a deity of a Semitic tribe before its departure from the ancestral home, and before in Babylon he had become connected with Ea. There is good reason for thinking that some of his original worshippers who remained in the neighbourhood of Sinai are known to us as Midianites.

Through the Semites' settlement in Babylon a superior deity might come to have districts which he claimed as peculiarly his, yet retaining his early official and peculiar residence. Jehovah was worshipped at Ur-Kashdim, and Haran, but his special seat was Sinai. Though other and inferior gods resided there,[2] it was specially identified with Jehovah,[3] and known as his mountain upon which

[1] See Margoliouth, "Hebrew and Babylonian Affinities," *Contemporary Review*, Oct. 1898. The criticisms of Mr Japp (*Some Heresies dealt with*, p. 254) do not really touch Margoliouth's position.

[2] The mountain of the gods: Exod. iii. 1; iv. 27; xviii. 5; xxiv. 12.

[3] See such passages as Exod. iii. 19; Num. x. 33; Deut. xxxiii. 2; Judges v. 5; Psalm lxviii. 17. At a later period when Jehovah was

his glory could be seen as devouring flame.[1] Jehovah's land was, of course, closely connected with Sinai. Boundaries to-day may be, and often are, purely artificial[2]; in early times they were and had to be great natural features. From Sinai, Jehovah's land, protected and defined by the mountains towards the south, stretched northwards between a desert of sea and a desert of sand, till it struck the Lebanons. But though Palestine belonged to Jehovah, and should therefore be peopled by his worshippers, at some time and under circumstances of which we are ignorant, his worship in it had ceased. The connection had to be renewed. A great Babylonian god always had among his worshippers select individuals in close touch with himself, to whom he could communicate his will and desires. Jehovah, like other deities, had his "Prophets." One of these was a sheik named Abraham who in accordance with the expressed wish of Jehovah emigrated from Babylon to Palestine. In the development of nearly all the higher religion the time comes when the story of the religion is considered so valuable as to be written. In the time of Abraham the progress of religion in the line of Semitic and Babylonian development reached that stage, the teaching had become

thought of as dwelling in the skies, he came down upon Sinai, Neh. ix. 13. In Gen. xxii. 2 etc., the Mount of Jehovah is clearly Sinai.

[1] Exod. xxiv. 15, 17; Deut. ix. 15.

[2] Bryce, *American Commonwealth*, p. 416.

so valuable as to be worth recording in a book.

The fourth division is a book, the Old Testament, in which is preserved the record of the further development of this religion. The Abrahamic offshoot from Babylon developed into a nation, the Hebrews, unimportant in art, science, or politics, but of unequalled importance in the sphere of religion. Like each of the other Semitic nations, the Hebrews developed the common religion along a line peculiarly its own. Yet in Israel the advance from Kathenotheism to Monolatry is marked by peculiar features. When Israel entered Palestine from the desert, the tribes settled in districts each of which had its own local Baal. The struggles which led to the consolidation of the former inhabitants and the invaders into one nation meant a struggle for supremacy among the deities. From these struggles Jehovah emerged as the supreme god. The conquests of David under the banner of Jehovah, and the erection of a magnificent Temple, attracted the affection and the patriotism of the nation to Jehovah, and Kathenotheism passed into Monolatry. In the reign of Ahab an attempt to introduce the worship of Melkart of Zidon, in order to make him the supreme god in Israel, raised in the mind of Elijah[1] and others the

[1] The taunts in 1 Kings xviii. 27 come from the lips of a man who had ceased to believe in any other God than Jehovah.

question,—Was there, or could there be, any other god than Jehovah? In their efforts to defeat the attempt on behalf of Melkart it became clear to them that Jehovah was the only god, and Monolatry began to pass into Monotheism. All these prolonged struggles made clearer and clearer the character of the various deities, made clearer the character of Jehovah, till finally his rightness, His purity, His justice, and His kindness shone out conspicuously in holy splendour. Just at the time when Israel, or at least the higher minds in Israel, had grasped the fact of the "aloneness" of Jehovah, had realised that besides Him there was no god, Assyria awoke and bent her genius to the conquest of the Semitic world. The wars which ensued were not mere political contests, they were religious struggles. The armies were led and inspired by the presence of their respective gods. Hence the victory of a nation meant the ascendancy of its god. Assyria and Asshur were everywhere triumphant. Hamath and its gods, the gods of Arpad and Sepharvaim, of Hena and Ivah (2 Kings xviii. 34) had perished with their worshippers. But though Assyria humbled Israel, Jehovah triumphed over Asshur. The Israelites realised that Jehovah had overthrown their state on account of their sins, and His use of the foreign foe to do this holy work in their highest interests, exhibiting as it did His world-

wide power, His unbending rightness, His genuine love for them, made them cling to Him with a more tenacious faith. To the conquests of Assyria succeeded those of Babylon, of Persia, of Alexander, till the legions of Rome gave humanity the *Pax Romana*, and thus created a new world in which religion had its part to play. The stronger and nobler faiths saw the new situation. They began to absorb what was of value in the meaner and weaker cults around them, to develop their deeper and more spiritual truths, to strive to attain to monotheism,[1] and to realise that if they were to survive they could do so only by winning the devotion of men in this new world where toleration would give victory to that religion which proved itself best fitted to meet the deepest wants of the best men. An example or two will make this plain.

The conquests scattered the Jews. In all lands, from Persia with its Mithraism to Britain

[1] "In Rome the dim monotheism of the people turned to the glorification of Jupiter." (Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, p. 543.) In philosophy the tendency is seen in the works of Æschylus and Plato, and in those of the Cynics, "probably the purest monotheists that classical antiquity produced" (p. 363). "The initiation of Apuleius in all the mysteries, the reverent visits of Apollonius to every temple and oracle from the Ganges to the Guadalquivir, the matins of Alexander Severus in a chapel which enshrined the images of Abraham and Orpheus, of Apollonius and Christ," are indications of the same tendency. Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, p. 388; and Dill, *Roman Society in the Last Century of the Western Empire*, p. 8.

with its Druid rites, from Woden's shrines to Isis' sacred isle, the Jew carried the pure worship of the one universal God with its energy for rightness, its uplifting purity, and its new and winsome note of tenderness. And then there arose in Judaism the religion of Jesus. His followers, recognising Jesus as God, saw in His life the perfect revelation of the character of the one God, the universal Father, in the uniqueness of its rightness, the splendour of its purity, and the beneficence of its love. The new religion, absorbing all that was of permanent value in Judaism, sloughed off all local and racial limitations, and proclaimed itself the perfect religion for all men, in all ages, in all climes, bringing to men a knowledge of the One God which satisfied and stimulated their highest desires and holiest ambitions. This newest yet oldest religion had rivals not unworthy of its opposition. The religion of Egypt, gathering up into itself all that was best in the various cults in the land of the Nile, training itself to think by its intercourse with foreigners, casting aside most of the degradations of its zoolatry, developed a mysticism, a spiritual energy, a belief in immortality, which, embodied in an attractive ritual, made it acceptable to earnest souls, and carried the worship of Isis, with its matins and vespers, as far as the dales of Yorkshire.

The change is even more clearly seen in Mithraism. It developed certain moral and spiritual principles, which had long been enshrined in its teaching, into a doctrine of mediatorial sympathy and a scheme of sacramental mystery, and these won for it the enthusiastic devotion of a large section of the Roman world. Gradually Mithraism and the worship of Isis realised how much they had in common with each other, with the worship of Magna Mater, and with the old Roman religion, which expressed itself in the apotheosis of the emperor. The syncretism culminated in the heliolatry of Julian, "which swept all the great worships of strong vitality into its system, softened their differences, and accentuated their similarities."[1] This syncretism was not only induced by sympathy, it was intensified by the determined advance of the religion of Jesus. The fusion of religions under Rome finally brought this about, that practically two religions faced each other, the religion of Jesus, which had gathered up into itself all that was truly valuable in the past which it represented; and the cult of the Emperor Julian, which had also fused all that was good and worthy in the religions of Greece, Rome, and the older cults of the Egyptians and the later Semitic world. The contest between

[1] Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, p. 556.

the religion of Jesus and that represented by Julian had its issue marked by the words of the dying Emperor, "O Galilean, Thou has conquered." To the world of the age following that of the Apostate, an age which knew nothing of the religions of the Further East, an age preceding the birth of Mahomet, there was but one religion, the religion of Jesus.

III. The Relation of the Religion of Jesus to Religion

The development of religion which I have thus very inadequately and imperfectly summarised proceeded in accordance with the ordinary laws of human progress, and its trend was on the whole upwards. The progress of religion coincides in many respects with the progress of civilisation. That progress has been in no respect uniform. Some races have moved onward and then sunk back; some have reached a level a little higher than savagery and then became stationary; other races, like the Chinese, developed a very high state of civilisation which became a rigid system, preventing all further progress; while the main movement of civilisation has gone steadily on and at last embodied itself in the nations of Western Europe, whose high state of civilisation is but the prelude and the promise of one still higher. So

we find religion at all levels, so low as scarcely to exist, as in Australia[1] and the islands of Torres Straits;[2] higher still, as in that of ancient Egypt; higher still, but stagnant, as in China; but the main current has flowed onwards and upwards from the lowest beginnings, through the religion of the Semites, of Babylonia, through Judaism, and finally comes to full fruition in the religion of Jesus. This is no new conception, for Augustine has well said, "That which is now called the Christian religion existed among the ancients, and in fact was with the human race from the beginning." Why is this called the main current? It might be said in reply, just for the same reason as that is called the main current of civilisation which flowed through the peoples of Babylonia, Phœnicia, Crete, Greece, and Rome, till it takes shape in the culture of Western Europe. But it deserves the name for weightier reasons.

1. Because along this line the highest results have been reached. Among religions there ever has been and there is now a struggle for existence, and that which survives is that which best meets the best thoughts of the best men. The best

[1] *The Native Tribes of Central Australia*, B. Spencer and E. J. Gillon.

[2] In *Anthropological Essays presented to Edward Burnet Tylor* (1907), Prof. A. C. Haddon says (p. 188), "Unless the heroes of the cults be regarded as gods, I think it can be definitely stated that the Torres Straits islanders had no deities, and certainly they had no conception of a Supreme God."

religion, roughly speaking, is that which makes the best men, which by restraining the passions and appetites of the body, vitalising the mind, moralising the life, lifting the soul into tender communion with God, makes a noble man. No religion has done this so effectively as the religion of Jesus; and when men professing this religion have failed to live up to its high standard, it is not because the religion was not sufficient for these things, but because they have not been loyal to its greatness.

2. The religion of Jesus is worthy to be called "The Religion" because it has been able to assimilate all that was good in all other faiths. Assimilation means taking up into the system that which helps on its higher development, and rejecting that which hinders it. Often this is one act and not two, for the helpful and the hurtful may be so much one that all must be taken, and gradually the evil expelled and the good absorbed. We see this in the religion of Jesus as we see it in no other religion. The ancient Babylonian religion seems to have gathered up and to a certain extent spiritualised all that was of worth in the older and ruder faiths which preceded it in an undiscovered past. What was best in it was incorporated in the religion of the primitive Hebrews. Their religion again absorbed all that was good in the religion as well as the culture of

the Canaanites, of the later Babylonians during the Exile, and of the earlier Persians in the period following the Exile. All these have been taken up into and made parts of the religion of Jesus. When at a later time the religion of Jesus met all that was good in the other religions in the syncretic creed of Julian, that too it did not reject but absorbed. This absorption, history shows, was to a considerable extent an absorption of elements good and bad, and the task of the Reformation and of that great but silent revolution in the midst of which we are living is to distinguish and separate out from official Christianity in its many forms all those elements which are alien to the simple religion of Jesus, which hinder its advance, and prevent men from seeing the splendour of its glory. Even as it is, the religion of Jesus is exercising the most uplifting power over the minds and hearts of the most highly civilised races the world has known. It has set its heart, as no other faith has, on the winning of the world. The attempt to win all kinds of men, in all stages of progress. is a new task which the religion of Jesus is just beginning to learn how to tackle, and the deeper knowledge which comes from nobly trying will equip its workers all the better for the task. One great truth the emissaries of Jesus are learning is that, like their Master, they come not to destroy but to fulfil, to

take every good element out of the ancient faiths or the degraded cults they meet, and bring it in a higher form to bear more strongly on the lives of those whom they try to win for their Lord.

3. The study of the various religions shows us that certain great ideas, as the conception of the divine, of sin, of the god dying for man, of the god becoming man, of god and man living in communion with each other, exist in nearly all religions worthy of the name. This appearing of such ideas in a hundred varying forms shows that they are fundamental, and express desires which are universal and inseparable from man. The religion which carries them to the highest levels, so as to cause them to work most powerfully for the elevation of men, is surely the highest type of religion. In tracing the main current we see these being refined, made more spiritual, more ethical, and more powerful, each stage in such development preparing for one still higher. "The religions of the world are the manifestation of the religion of the world."

4. These considerations lead us on to another. Just as our scientists have been led from the order, the beauty, the slow, steady, onward movement we call evolution to believe that behind and through all this movement there is a mind which in it discloses something of itself, so when we trace the development of religion, trace it especially along

the main line, we see that behind this development there must be mind,—may we not say the same mind?—revealing in this wondrous evolution its character, itself. That revelation is the revelation of God.

Such a conception of religion and revelation banishes from the *study* of religion all that is implied by such words as peculiar, particular, divine, miraculous, supernatural. It is quite possible that at the end of such a study certain facts (such as for example the nature of Jesus) may stand out as things for which we cannot account by any natural process, by any kind of working of cause and effect. If so, then all lovers of truth will just have to admit that the origin, the cause of this is not natural but extra-natural. The study itself must, however, be along natural lines. And here we must not forget the great truths modern science has taught us. God works in and through the natural; the divine is the natural. Our fathers thought of the world as divinely made, because to them it was the outcome of definite creative acts. We know it to be the work of God because we have come to see how it was slowly evolved through the operation of natural laws and forces. Our fathers thought of man as made by God because they conceived of him as called into existence by a special act of God; we have learned how great, how godlike

man is, by learning how he came to be what he is by a long and slow development. Some men continue to think of the religion of Jesus as divinely true because it has in it something exceptional, extra-natural. Others more truly believe that the religion of Jesus is the revelation of God because it has been evolved by a process, the majesty, the mystery, the divineness of which is seen in its naturalness. It is the light of the world. The joy of those who know it is to perfect it.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY AND UNDIVIDED TRINITY, by the Rev. PROFESSOR COOPER, D.D., Glasgow.

THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOLY AND UNDIVIDED TRINITY

THERE is no subject of such transcendent or of such practical importance as the Nature of ALMIGHTY GOD. The law of faith is the law of worship: it is also the law of daily conduct:—

> "Grant us, this and every day,
> To live more nearly as we pray."

Creed and conduct, we all admit, should go together. As a matter of fact they do go together, and that much more closely than is nowadays very commonly supposed. Every one of the great religions of the world has produced, and does produce, among its followers a distinct type of character; and within the bounds of Christendom the same thing may be observed. Omit one article of the Christian creed, and immediately the moral effect becomes visible; nay, the mere emphasising, or again the putting into the background, of any of the main doctrines or precepts of the Gospel is not long in bearing practical fruit. How much more, then, when it is the main doctrine of all, the

nature of the God we are to worship, which is in question.

We Christians profess to have received a revelation on the subject from God Himself. We are not in the position of inquirers, who have to ask either Is there a God? or What is His Name? or What symbol shall set forth His Nature? We are disciples, the disciples of One Who "hath declared Him": Who was competent to do so, alike by relationship to Him and loving intimacy with Him. As St John says, "No man hath seen God at any time: the Only Begotten God, which was in the Bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him" (St John i. 18, R.V. Margin).

It is true, I am aware, that the first object of belief which our Blessed Lord presented to His disciples was Himself; that His question alike to friends and foes was, "Who say ye that I am?" (St Matt. xvi. 15). "What think ye of the Christ, Whose Son is He?" (St Matt. xxii. 42). But it is impossible to look at Christ, and still more impossible to listen to Him, without being taught by Him of two other Divine Persons, the Father and the Holy Ghost. Of the Father He was always speaking. I need quote only a single text, "All things have been delivered to Me of My Father; and no one knoweth the Son save the Father; neither doth any one know the Father save the Son, and he to

whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him" (St Matt. xi. 27); while the great promise of Christ, the theme of His last discourse before His Passion with His disciples, is that He will give the Holy Ghost, whom He describes in the plainest terms as a Person, Omniscient, Almighty, All-Holy, the very Spirit of God the Father (St John xiv.-xvi.). The remark of Bishop Pearson that the very title "Christ" implies (1) an Anointer, (2) a Person Anointed, and (3) an Anointing, may have the air of mere verbal ingenuity; in reality it is all too small to set forth the fulness of the fact that our Lord, as we see Him in the Gospels, is ever, and always, the witness not to Himself alone, but also to God the Father, and to God the Holy Ghost.

And this revelation of God, which Jesus was always making, gathers itself up into clearest form at (*a*) the beginning, and (*b*) the end of His public Ministry. Christ is manifested to Israel (St John i. 31), and He is manifested when and how? At His Baptism in Jordan, where, as He is praying, the heaven opens, and the Divine voice of God the Father announces Him, "This is My Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased;" while the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father, descended as a dove and abode upon Him (St Matt. iii. 16, 17, St John i. 31-34).

This was the first unmistakable revelation of all the Three Persons of the Godhead. It was continued, as we have seen, and developed, in the teachings of our Saviour. Expressed in, or underlying, every word He said and every act He did, He summed it up at last, at the latest moments of His sojourn on earth, in the Name of God (the symbol to unveil His Nature) which He commanded His disciples to put upon every man, woman, and child that they received into His Church: "Go, make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost" (St Matt. xxviii. 19). This Name, if it is the Name of Three Persons (distinguished simply by the difference of their relationship to each other, not by any difference of being or nature), is yet One Name; and our Lord, Who gave it as the Name of God, had expressly and solemnly republished the creed of Moses: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one: and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength" (St Mark xii. 29-30). Nor has the Church ever held, or ever tolerated, the notion that there are more Gods than one.

Our Lord Himself, therefore, if He did not use the term "Trinity," taught both the twin

truths which make up the Doctrine of the Trinity—the Unity of GOD, and the Three Divine Persons in the GODHEAD.

The revelation of GOD, thus given by CHRIST Himself, was taught first orally by the Apostles, who, with their pupils and assistants, went out and preached it throughout the whole world from the Euphrates to the Tiber, from the Euxine to the Nile. As they preached, so they baptized; and when they had occasion to write to their converts, whether in Gospel or Epistle, their writings constantly imply the doctrine; and ever and anon they set it forth in terms which show beyond question that they believed it themselves and wrote for readers who believed it.[1]

The Christian Church, therefore, like her Jewish predecessor, "worshipped That which she knew" (St John iv. 22, R.V.); she worshipped the FATHER, and the SON, and the HOLY GHOST; very soon (as we shall see) she began to call these Three together the Trinity (τριάς); and as one heretic after another offered her some other doctrine in its place, a monopersonal GOD who *adopted* a man to be HIS SON (Adoptionist), or again a monopersonal GOD who played several parts, to which the names of Father, of Son, or of Spirit might successively be applied (Sabellian),

[1] All the books of the New Testament are addressed to readers who already are baptized members of the Christian Church.

she repudiated all such explanations as contrary to the Faith she had received.

At last, when, by the sixth century, every conceivable variation of teaching on the subject had been vented, she spoke in the solemn tones of the *Quicunque vult*, and warned all who desired to be saved that they must not allow themselves to be seduced into any sort of error contrary to the truth she had received from CHRIST and HIS Apostles, and from the beginning of her course had taught.

The *Quicunque vult* (the so-called Athanasian Creed) has ever since remained the supreme statement of what the doctrine of the Trinity is. Let me recall to you its clear and majestic words:— "The Catholic Faith is this that we worship One GOD in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; neither confounding the Persons: nor dividing the Substance. For there is one Person of the FATHER, another of the SON: and another of the HOLY GHOST. But the GODHEAD of the FATHER, of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST, is all one: the Glory equal, the Majesty co-eternal. Such as the FATHER is, such is the SON: and such is the HOLY GHOST. The FATHER uncreate, the SON uncreate, the HOLY GHOST uncreate. The FATHER incomprehensible," (*i.e.* infinite), "the SON incomprehensible, and the HOLY GHOST incomprehensible. So likewise the FATHER is Almighty, the SON Almighty, and the HOLY GHOST Almighty.

And yet They are not Three Almighties: but one Almighty. So the FATHER is GOD, the SON is GOD, and the HOLY GHOST GOD. And yet They are not three Gods, but one GOD. So likewise the FATHER is LORD, the SON LORD, and the HOLY GHOST LORD. And yet not three LORDS, but one LORD. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge every Person by HIMSELF to be GOD and LORD; so we are forbidden by the Catholic Religion to say, There be three Gods, or three Lords. The FATHER is made of none: neither created, nor begotten. The SON is of the FATHER alone; not made, nor created, but begotten. The HOLY GHOST is of the FATHER and the SON; neither made, nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. So there is one FATHER, not three Fathers; one SON, not three Sons: one HOLY GHOST, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this TRINITY none is afore, or after other; none is greater, or less than another; but the whole Three Persons are co-eternal together, and co-equal. So that in all things, as is aforesaid: the Unity in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity is to be worshipped."

There are many in all our Churches, I am aware, who dislike what are called the "damnatory clauses" of this great "Sermon on the Faith"—largely, as I think, because they take its opening words, *Quicunque vult salvari*, as if they ran

Quicunque salvabitur. As a matter of fact the "Athanasian Creed" says, in its closing words, "They that have *done good* shall go into everlasting life: and they that *have done evil* into everlasting fire." In those so-called damnatory clauses, it says simply that if you want to be saved from sin (from doing evil) and to learn to do well, you must believe the religion of HIM who is the only Saviour from sin. But leaving that as a side issue, and confining ourselves to the *Quicunque* as a statement of the doctrine of the Trinity, it is the simple fact that there is no National Church which has not adopted its statement of the doctrine. Its doctrine of the Trinity is the doctrine of the Greek Church,[1] of the Roman Catholic Church, of the Anglican Church. The Lutherans prefixed "the Three Creeds"—the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian—all of them distinctly Trinitarian—to the *Augsburg Confession*, and they form part of the public confession of the Lutheran Churches to this present day; while the Calvinistic, or "Reformed Churches," declared in their preface to their chief Confession, the *Second Helvetic* (1566), "With a sincere heart we believe and freely profess whatsoever things are defined out of the Holy Scriptures and com-

[1] The Greek Church rejects the words "and the SON," objecting to the method of their introduction (in the West) into the Nicene Creed, and misunderstanding the sense which Western Christians put upon them.

prehended in the Creeds, and in the decrees of those four first and most excellent Councils—held at Nicæa, Constantinople, Ephesus, and Chalcedon —together with Blessed Athanasius's Creed, and all other creeds like to these." To this *Second Helvetic Confession* the Church of Scotland twice solemnly adhered, once in 1566, under the guidance of John Knox, and once again in 1638, under the leadership of Alexander Henderson, the famous "Apostle of the Covenant," the overthrower of Charles I.'s Episcopacy and Prayer-Book. In the eighteenth century, in the trial of Professor Simson for heresy, the Athanasian symbol was treated by both sides as authoritative. And its whole doctrine is embodied in the *Westminster Confession of Faith.*

Nor would I be saying anything that the facts of the case are insufficient to justify were I to add that every Church which has departed from this Faith has *ipso facto* sealed its own death-warrant. It is beyond question that those Churches, and congregations, in England and in Ireland which, in the eighteenth century, let go the doctrine of the Trinity, faded away and disappeared. CHRIST built HIS Church on the rock of St Peter's confession of HIS Godhead. You cannot build a lasting Church on any other rock ("other foundation," as St Paul says, "can no man lay than that is laid"); and you cannot hold

CHRIST's Godhead apart from the doctrine of the Trinity.

It is also true, of course, that "to a considerable number of individuals not otherwise prejudiced against Christianity, this doctrine is a serious stumbling-block. They imagine that they would find it simpler to believe in a GOD who should be *one Person* as well as *one Substance*, like the God presented by the Mahommedan, or by the modern Jewish religion." They think Unitarianism more reasonable than Catholic Christianity. "It seems to them a needless complication, an arbitrary dogmatic imposition, to teach that there is a FATHER, a SON, and a SPIRIT, who are all ONE. If they do not think it an actual contradiction, a sheer impossibility, they think it a metaphysical puzzle, which the brains of ordinary Christians ought not to be troubled with. They cannot understand why the Church should be so solemn in her warnings against all attempts to deny any of the terms of her Faith, or to explain away any portion of that Name of GOD which our ascending SAVIOUR bequeathed to us, *the Name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST.*"[1]

This temper has had its representatives in every age; and in all ages those who have yielded to it

[1] Mason, *Faith of the Gospel.*

have endeavoured to get rid of the doctrine, sometimes by direct denial, denying, *e.g.*, (*a*) that it is scriptural, (*b*) that it is primitive, or (*c*) that it is of practical importance ; sometimes, again, by bringing forward some other doctrine in its place, Unitarianism, Sabellianism, Arianism, or Tritheism. But the Church, as I have said, has been firm, and in the long run unanimous in rejecting alike all these denials, and all these substitutes. She has known the Faith ; and, amid all variations upon other points, she has maintained it. Catholic worship and Evangelical preaching alike take the Trinity for granted, and proceed upon it. We could neither say "Glory be to the FATHER, and to the SON, and to the HOLY GHOST," nor could we preach "Believe in the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and thou shalt be saved" unless we held it.

We may go further. The very doctrine which modern Unitarianism parades as peculiarly its own, the FATHERHOOD of GOD, and the teaching of St John, that *God is Love*, are cut off by their very roots, if GOD be a barren unity such as Mahommedanism and modern Judaism assert HIM to be. Certain it is that neither the one nor the other of those religions teaches either one or the other of these most blessed truths. Unitarianism got them from Christianity ; but, as I said, denying the Christian doctrine of the TRINITY, Unitarianism leaves for them no intelligible basis.

Love implies an object: if God were mono-personal, He could not have began to love till He had first created something on which to fix His love. That is to say, He could not *be* love. In like manner "the FATHER" implies "the SON." The terms are relative. Where there is no SON there is no FATHER. On the Unitarian's lips "Fatherhood" can, logically, be no more than a certain "fatherly benevolence" or affection, which was not eternal, but began when the creature on whom it rests came into existence, or attracted its MAKER's notice.

It is sometimes alleged, however, that the Doctrine of the TRINITY is not scriptural. We answer that it is: that if the terms in which we speak of it, "Trinity," "Persons," "Substance" are not in Scripture, yet the *area of thought* which these terms cover most certainly is; that the truths which the Church understands by these terms are all taught in Scripture; and that the Church's whole doctrine on the subject may be *proved from* Scripture.

Of course, if the doctrine of the Trinity is true now, it was always true. One part of this truth —the Unity of GOD (that there is no GOD but one) —was revealed to the Jews. The other part of it (that within the one Divine Substance there are Three distinct Persons) was not plainly revealed

under the ancient dispensation, and we can explain why. There was constant danger lest Israel should fall into the error of the heathen, and imagine that there were more gods than one. Still—for *our* sake, lest *we* should deem it (when at last it was revealed) the mere novelty which the modern Jews declare it to be, there were *hints* and *suggestions* of it even in the Old Testament. These abound in the Book of Genesis (i. 26; iii. 22; xi. 7; xviii. 2, 3, 10; xlviii. 15, 16); but there are examples all through the Old Testament, for instance, Num. vi. 24-26; Ps. xxxiii. 6; Ps. cx. 1; Isa. vi. 3 and 8; Hos. ii. 19, 20; and Zec. xii. 9, 10, and xiii. 7. The Old Testament teaching in regard (*a*) to the MESSIAH whom it promises (Pss. xlv., lxxii.; Isa. ix.); in regard (*b*) to the Wisdom of God (in the eighth chapter of Proverbs), a wisdom which is *Personal*, and, as I heard Professor G. Adam Smith preach, "at heart redemptive"[1]); in regard (*c*) to the *Arm* and the *Word* of JEHOVAH; again, (*d*), in that remarkable series of visions called the *Theophanies*, bears abundant witness to the personal distinctness, and the true Godhead of the SON. It is no less clear, in many passages from Genesis to Zechariah, as to the SPIRIT of GOD. These features of the Old Testament are not to be lightly dismissed. They have their explanation in the fact that the earlier

[1] In a fine sermon preached before the University of Glasgow.

volume of Revelation was intended to be followed, as it has been, by a second. It is simple matter of fact that the Old Testament was a preparation for Catholic Christianity. As such the Catholic Church accepted it. As such she uses it.

There was enough to prepare the thoughtful and believing reader for the claims which JESUS was to make: enough to prove that HIS claims, when HE did make them, were sanctioned by the Old Testament; as were also HIS declarations concerning "Another COMFORTER," the HOLY GHOST, whom HE described as proceeding from the FATHER, and promised to send upon the Church (St John xiv., xv., xvi.).

But the *knowledge* of the mystery was not necessary till the Second Person of the Holy Trinity had become Man, and the Third Person was about to become the Teacher of the Church. Therefore (as we have seen) the distinct revelation of it was first made for us at the Baptism of CHRIST, when HIS public Ministry began. The Three Adorable Persons, in short, were manifested in the work of man's Redemption; and the language used by our LORD and HIS Apostles in the New Testament describes Each of Them severally as GOD and LORD; as all equal (St John v. 17, 18; x. 30; xiv. 9, 11; Acts v. 3, 4); but still as only One GOD. I have already cited our SAVIOUR'S taking up the words of Deuteronomy,

"Hear, O Israel, the LORD our GOD is one LORD" (St Mark xii. 29). HIS doctrine was twice re-asserted by St Paul (1 Cor. viii. 4, and Eph. iv. 6). GOD the FATHER is revealed to us in Scripture as the First Cause of all things (1 Cor. viii. 6); GOD the SON as the CREATOR (St John i. 1-3; Col. i. 16; Heb. i. 2) and REDEEMER (Rom. iv. 24, 25; 1 Cor. xv. 3; 1 St Peter ii. 24); and GOD the HOLY GHOST as the Life Giver (St John vi. 63; Rom. viii. 2, 11), Teacher (St John xvi.; 2 St Peter i. 21), and Sanctifier (Gal. vi. 8). Then, as we saw, our LORD, before HE left the world, summed up HIS whole doctrine of GOD in "the Name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST," into which HE commanded His disciples to baptize all the nations. This Name involves the doctrine of the Trinity. It cannot be accounted for, much less expounded, on any other view; and it must be borne in mind that while HE gave it just before HIS Ascension, as HIS last and crowning revelation, it was received by multitudes before one book of the New Testament was written. The Church is older than the New Testament. The New Testament was written to the Church; it was understood by those who not only knew already this Name of GOD, but had been baptized *into* it. "*Into the Name*," says Canon Mason—"That Name is the Gospel. Every spiritual privilege we enjoy is to be found in it.

Our baptism ushers us into it; for it puts us into a living connexion with the GOD who is thus set forth, and who obviously wishes us to understand what the Name means."

The doctrine is *Primitive* as well as scriptural. Controversy (controversy with those who wished to substitute their own speculations for the once-delivered Faith) made churchmen more careful and accurate in the terms they employed, and even drove them to invent new words to guard against misrepresentations of the ancient Faith; but the substance of that Faith, it can be shown (and has been shown once for all by Bp. Bull) was held from the beginning. The last few years have witnessed the discovery of two very old but long-lost Christian treatises, the *Didaché* (or Teaching of the Twelve—first or second century)—and the *Apology of Aristides* (*circ.* 118). Both of these bear emphatic witness to the doctrine of the Trinity. "Baptize," says the *Didaché*, "into the Name (εἰς τὸ ὄνομα) of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST" (vii. 1). Christians, says Aristides (c. 15), "know GOD the Creator and Fashioner of all things through the Only-Begotten SON and the HOLY SPIRIT; and beside HIM they worship no other GOD." The *word* "Trinity" (as a term) we first find in the *Epistle to Autolycus* of Theophilus of Antioch, *circ.* 180. In the year 256 we have the admirable "Treatise of Novatian, a Roman

presbyter, concerning the Trinity," written with a special view to confute the errors of Sabellius.[1] The Apostles' Creed, which is simply an expansion of the Baptismal Name, we know now to have been in use as early as 144 in the Church at Rome. I need not multiply instances. "The whole succession of the ante-Nicene Fathers," says Principal Hill, "though their illustrations are not always the most pertinent, discover by innumerable passages that they worshipped the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST, as constituting what Tertullian calls in the second century, *Trinitas unius Divinitatis;* Cyprian in the third, *Adunata Trinitas*, and Athanasius in the fourth, ἀδιάρετος τρίας." (Hill's *Lectures in Divinity.*)

The Church rejected every other doctrine, as not merely erroneous, but blasphemous towards GOD, and destructive of their religion. She rejected thus "the GOD-denying novelties of the tanner of Byzantium" (Theodotus), and the worldly liberalism of Paul of Samosata. She abhorred the Sabellianism of the third century. When Arius propounded his error she witnessed against it with one voice; and neither the bribes nor the persecution of emperors, nor the defection of confessors so venerable and illustrious as Hosius of Cordova and Liberius of Rome, could move

[1] A translation of this work is given in the Ante-Nicene Library, where it is appended to the Works of Cyprian (vol. ii.).

her as a body to accept anything except the doctrine of the Trinity. When Macedonianism attempted to treat her doctrine of the Holy Ghost much as Arianism had treated that of the Eternal Son, she rejected it at once.

There are two chief forms of error in regard to this truth (besides that which we know as Unitarianism) that we must guard against, Tritheism and Sabellianism.

Tritheism, or the doctrine that the Three Persons are Three Gods, has never been formally maintained, though it may be feared that it is unconsciously the creed of a great many persons who have no wish to dispute the teaching of the Church. But it is "*forbidden by the Catholic Religion*"—directly in the Old Testament and in the New, and by the fact that "the very notion of Deity is such that we cannot conceive of it as possessed by more than one Being. Two or three or more beings of infinite perfection but mutually exclusive cannot co-exist, for they must necessarily be limited by each other, which would be a contradiction in terms. Nothing of this kind is taught by the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. The Threefold Personality of God does not contradict His Unity in any way; it shows the manner or condition of it. It is not a harmony of will between Three individuals; it

is a true though inexpressible unity of Three Persons mutually depending upon each other, and completing each other, indivisible, and incapable of existence apart from one another. The life of all Three is one and the same life; and it has but one source, not three. The very titles by which They are known to us imply this. These are not proper names like those of the heathen divinities, but titles of relationship which involve each other and would be meaningless alone.

Yet we must not confuse the Persons any more than divide the substance, for that would destroy the Christian verity. CHRIST says—"I and My FATHER"; and, "WE will come to him." "Believe *also* in ME." "The FATHER *and* the SON *and* the HOLY GHOST"; and again, "I will pray the FATHER and HE will give you *another* COMFORTER." Sabellianism turns all such texts into "a rhapsody of words." It does worse. It destroys that glorious fact of GOD's Being, which reveals HIM to us (amid all its sublime mysteriousness) as sufficient of HIMSELF and in HIMSELF: finding in HIS own Being the objects of HIS eternal love, the conditions of HIS everlasting felicity, the "*image*" after which to create alike the individual man in HIS tripartite nature, and human society in its dear relationships.

Thus this much-maligned doctrine of the Trinity supplies us, on the one hand, with the

supreme guarantee of our Christian persuasion that "God is love," and bend us in adoration as glad as it is reverent—watch a congregation as they sing the hymn, "Holy, Holy, Holy!" It provides us, on the other hand, with the theological basis for those Social Institutions which most of all evoke self-sacrificing love between man and man—the Family, the State, the Church. Why should a monopersonal God say concerning a creature made in His own image, "It is not good that the man should be alone?" But if the Creator was indeed a Trinity, the reason becomes clear at once. Wedlock, Fatherhood, Sonship are so many means of reproducing on earth, according to the measure of the creature, the archetypal relations in which the Creator had from all eternity found scope for the outflow of His goodness, and joy in letting it thus flow; while the august plurals in which His purpose is declared—"Let us make man in Our image after Our likeness," (Gen. i. 26) gain a new significance to the enlightened ear of the Christian hearer.

The Family, like God, though not monopersonal, is one. So also is the State—"a kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation." So, above all, is God's Household and God's Kingdom, the Church. Because she is the creation of the Holy and Undivided Trinity, the Church

is at once a unity and a plurality—"We being many are one bread . . . and one body" (1 Cor. x. 17). St Paul bases her unity upon the Trinity: "There is One Body, and" (as the cause thereof) "One SPIRIT . . . One LORD . . . One GOD and FATHER of all" (Eph. iv. 4-6); and our Blessed LORD (who made His Church one, who foresaw the carnal envies and strifes which should deprive for a season its members of the benefit and joy of subjective unity, who prayed for its visible union) grounds His petition on the oneness of the Persons in the GODHEAD—"that they may be one," He says, "as WE are one: I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one, that the world may know that Thou didst send Me, and lovedst them, even as Thou lovedst Me" (St John xvii. 23). It is what the world is needing; what the Church herself, through all her parts, at last is praying for; what Christ has promised: "They shall hear My voice, and they shall become one flock, one Shepherd" (St John x. 16). And it must be so if we are to be conformed to the image of our MAKER, for HE in His own eternal Being is Three Persons and One GOD.

Thus it can be seen how practical the doctrine is, covering the whole range of thought and conduct (GOD-ward at once and man-ward), of prayer also, and highest-soaring hope. It is a doctrine

radically incompatible with mere Individualism; but then we are not mere individuals. We are made for GOD, and for each other in GOD.

Well, then, may George Herbert thank God for having revealed this mystery:—

> "Thou hast but two rare caskets full of treasure,
> The Trinity and Incarnation.
> Thou hast unlocked them both."

And well may we, with all CHRIST'S Holy Church throughout the ages and throughout the world, confess it, contend for it, and boast in it, and sing it forth in that ancient strain which our Scottish Church historian, Calderwood, said he hoped he would sing in heaven—"Glory be to the FATHER, and to the SON, and to the HOLY GHOST; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen."

THE DIVINITY OF JESUS, by the Rev. DAVID SMITH, M.A., D.D., Blairgowrie.

THE DIVINITY OF JESUS

THE vindication of one's faith in the Divinity of our Lord is in these days a task of peculiar difficulty. It was once valid to quote the evangelic narratives and adduce not only the works which Jesus wrought but the claims which He made; and the controversies which arose had to do mainly with interpretation or with the historicity of a particular passage. But in these days it is alleged by a fashionable and influential school of criticism that our Gospels are practically worthless as historical documents. They depict Jesus, not as He actually lived among men, but as He appeared to a later generation, which beheld Him, transfigured and magnified, through a haze of reverence and superstition. His supernatural attributes are so much *Aberglaube*. The Evangelic Jesus is not historic but ideal. "The Christ of the Apostles is the forerunner of the Jesus of history," and "the task of the historical student" is to "work back, by aid of sources, to the facts."

And what remains when the work is done? Only, according to Professor Schmiedel,[1] nine mutilated fragments which amount to a repudiation

[1] Art. "Gospels" in *Encycl. Bibl.*, vol. ii.

of divinity and a confession of human weakness. These and these alone he pronounces "absolutely credible," "the foundation-pillars for a truly scientific life of Jesus."

It is interesting, and it may serve, on the one hand, to check the arrogance of unbelief and, on the other, to soothe the alarm of faith, that this attitude toward the evangelic records is no novelty. It is as ancient as the fourth century. "First," said St Augustine,[1] "must be discussed that question which is wont to trouble some, why the Lord Himself wrote nothing, so that it is necessary to believe the writings of others about Him. This is said by those, mostly pagans, who dare not blame or blaspheme the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and attribute to Him a most excellent wisdom, yet only as man. They say, however, that His disciples attributed to their Master more than the reality, inasmuch as they said that He was the Son of God and the Word of God by which all things were made, and that He and God the Father were one, and all of like sort in the Apostolic literature whereby we have learned that He should be worshipped as God one with the Father." The coincidence is remarkable, and it is in no wise singular. One who is familiar with the Patristic literature is frequently edified by recognising in the latest deliverances of destructive

[1] *De Cons. Ev.* i. 11.

criticism very antique foes tricked out in modern attire.

Such is the critical contention of our day, and I ask you to approach the problem by a path which seems to me most reasonable, and which, whatever its worth may be, has this to recommend it, that it has brought me to assurance of the historicity of the evangelic records and to a glad faith in the Divinity of our blessed Lord.

It is written in the opening chapter of the Fourth Gospel how Philip, in the wonder and joy of his discovery of the Messiah, sought out Nathanael and told him of it. "Him of whom Moses in the Law wrote and the Prophets, we have found—Jesus the Son of Joseph, the Man of Nazareth!" Nathanael would not believe it. A Galilean himself, he knew the ignorance of that northern province and the evil reputation of that particular town. "From Nazareth," he retorted contemptuously, quoting apparently a common proverb, "can there be anything good?" Philip did not attempt to argue the question. He answered simply: "Come and see." Nathanael went and saw, and presently his doubts were dispelled. "Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God! Thou art the King of Israel!"

Jesus was "His own best evidence." It was difficult for a Jew to allow His claims, so inconsistent did they seem with the Messianic expectation of

the day; yet He seldom argued the question. He simply manifested Himself in the wonder of His grace and goodness, and such as had eyes to see and hearts to understand the transcendent revelation needed no other evidence, and adored Him as their Lord.

Now, if the evangelic portraiture be indeed a faithful delineation of Him who dwelt in Palestine in those far off days, it ought to exercise, in some measure at least, a like compulsion upon those who approach it with open minds and earnest spirits. It ought to silence their doubt and command their faith. It were well if, in making this experiment, one were entirely ignorant of Christianity and could approach the Gospels with a perfectly unbiassed mind, after the manner of the old shoemaker in Tolstoï's story, *Where Love is there is God also*, or as one would some ancient MS. newly brought to light. This attitude is, of course, impossible for us, yet we may attain it more or less approximately by resolutely dismissing the prepossessions alike of faith and of unbelief and looking with unprejudiced eyes at the picture which the Evangelists have painted.

It is a singular and beautiful picture. It portrays One strangely unlike the men we know or have ever heard of. *The Evangelic Jesus is a sinless Man.* He is perfectly human. His knowledge is limited, and He expressly asserts its

limitation. He suffers weariness, hunger, thirst, and pain. He is in all points tempted like as we are. Yet He is never worsted by temptation, but passes through life stainless and irreprovable. He is among sinners, yet not of them.

The marvel of this representation is twofold. On the one hand, *Jesus claimed to be sinless.* He stood before the world, searched by a multitude of curious and critical eyes, and issued His confident challenge: "Which of you convicteth Me of sin?" He often felt the pang of hunger, but never the pang of remorse; He was often weary, but never burdened by guilt; He often prayed, but He never uttered a syllable of contrition or a cry for pardon. On the eve of His Betrayal, when the shadows of death were gathering about Him, He could lift up His eyes to heaven and say: "I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou hast given Me to do."

And this is a singular picture. A keen and lively sense of sin has ever been a characteristic of the saints. It is told of Juan de Avila (A.D. 1500-69) that as he lay dying, the rector of his college approached him and said: "What joy it must be to you to think of meeting the Saviour!" "Ah!" said the saint, "rather do I tremble at the thought of my sins." Such has ever been the judgment of the saints upon themselves, but as for

Jesus no word of self-condemnation ever crossed His lips, no lamentation over indwelling corruption, no sigh for a closer walk with God. It is not that He shut His eyes to the presence of sin or made light of its guilt. Renan, being asked what he made of sin, answered airily: "I suppress it!" but this was not the manner of Jesus. His assertion of the equal heinousness of the sinful thought and the sinful deed has immeasurably extended the sweep of the moral law and infinitely elevated the standard of holiness. He was keenly sensitive to the enormity of sin, and the world's guilt lay like a heavy burden on His heart. His presence was a rebuke, and to this hour the very thought of Him has the value of an external conscience. His spotless life is a revelation at once of the beauty of holiness and of the hatefulness of sin.

Nor is this the sole marvel. Not only did Jesus claim to be sinless, but *His claim was universally allowed.* The first, I think, who expressly challenged it was the philosopher Celsus toward the close of the second century.[1] His enemies in the days of His flesh would gladly have found some handle against Him; yet, though they jealously scrutinised Him, "searching Him with candles," they discovered only one offence which they could lay to His charge, and they did

[1] Orig., *Contra Celsum*, ii. 41.

not perceive that their accusation was in truth a striking testimony to His perfect and unique holiness. They saw Him mingling freely with social outcasts, conversing with them, and going to their houses; and they exclaimed: "This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them!" It would have been no surprise had He associated with sinners, being Himself a sinner. Their astonishment was that He should do this, being Himself so pure; and their exclamation was a covert suggestion that, for all His seeming holiness, He must be a sinner at heart. The fault, however, lay not with Him but with themselves. They did not understand that true holiness is nothing else than a great compassion. Such was the holiness of Jesus, and it was a new thing on the earth, an ideal which had never been conceived by the human heart. Had the Evangelists been setting forth their own conception of a holy man, they would have depicted Jesus after the likeness of a Pharisee.

It is very significant that Jesus' claim to sinlessness should have been thus allowed and all unconsciously attested by those who were bent on disproving it. Bronson Alcott once said to Carlyle that he could honestly use the words of Jesus, "I and the Father are one." "Yes," was the crushing retort, "but Jesus got the world to believe Him."

Another point to be noted is the assertion which Jesus, according to the Evangelists, constantly made and persisted in to the last, *that He stood in a unique relation alike toward God and toward men.* He identified Himself with God. "Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill Him, because He said God was His peculiar (ἴδιον) Father, making Himself equal to God" (John v. 18). "He that receiveth you," He says in His charge to the Twelve, "receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me." He sets Himself forth as greater than the Prophets. They were slaves; He is the Son, the Heir. They had spoken of Him, had seen His day afar off, and had longed to see Himself; and He announces Himself as the fulfilment of their prophecies. "Beginning from Moses and all the Prophets, He interpreted unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself."

Moreover, He claimed to be at once the Saviour and the Judge of men. He had "come to give His life a ransom for many"; He bade the weary and heavy laden come unto Him and find rest for their souls; and He spoke of a day when "the Son of Man shall come in His glory and all the angels with Him, and shall sit upon His throne of glory, and before Him shall be gathered all the nations." How tremendous His demands upon His followers! He pointed to the dearest,

tenderest, and most sacred relationships of human life, and claimed for Himself a prior devotion. "He that loveth father or mother above Me is not worthy of Me, and he that loveth son or daughter above Me is not worthy of Me." "If any one cometh unto Me and hateth not his father and mother and wife and children and brethren and sisters, yea, moreover his own life, he cannot be My disciple." It was not merely for God, nor yet merely for the Kingdom of Heaven, that He made those stupendous demands: it was for Himself. Conceive such language on the lips of a Galilean peasant! It would have seemed the language of insanity on the lips of Socrates or Julius Cæsar, and would have been greeted with ridicule and contempt. What was there about the gentle Jesus which made such language seem natural and fitting on His lips? It was not those who knew Him best and could judge most truly of the justice of His claims, but the blinded Jews, who said He was mad and sought to kill Him.

Again, *the words which the Evangelists put in the mouth of Jesus are unique.* One cannot read them without involuntarily echoing the confession: "Never man so spake!" There are no words like them either in the Bible or in any other book. How they sparkle and glow on the pages of the Gospels! It is neither exaggeration nor irrever-

ence to say that they are embedded in the evangelic narrative like jewels in a setting of base metal. One knows instinctively where Jesus ceases and the Evangelist begins: it is like passing into another atmosphere. I remember the late Professor A. B. Bruce describing how once, in his ministerial days, he was studying the miracle of the healing of the lunatic boy, and stumbled at the verse: "Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting" (Matt. xvii. 21). The mention of "fasting" seemed so alien from the spirit of Jesus. He turned up his Tischendorf and found that the verse has no place in the authentic text of the First Gospel, having been imported into it by some copyist to bring it into agreement with the parallel tradition of the Second (Mark. ix. 29), and, moreover, that the words "and fasting" should be omitted from the latter. The genuine sayings of Jesus are self-attesting. They are distinguishable from counterfeits by simple inspection.

And they are peerless. They have a beauty and a fragrance peculiarly their own. They are no lingering voices of a long vanished past. They are as fresh and living to-day as when they were first spoken by the Sea of Galilee or in the city of Jerusalem. They palpitate with life and make our hearts burn within us, reminding us how He said: "The words which I have

spoken unto you, they are spirit and they are life."

There is further in the Evangelic Jesus *a complete absence of distinctively national characteristics*; and this is the more remarkable inasmuch as He was born of a race notorious for its intense, exclusive, almost ferocious patriotism. The nationality of St Paul was constantly prominent. He could never have been mistaken for a Greek or a Roman. He says indeed that he became "all things to all men, that he might by all means save some"; but, whatever sympathetic disguises he might assume, he remained always a Hebrew of the Hebrews, proud of his nationality (Phil. iii. 4-7), and overflowing with tender and compassionate love for his people even while he pronounced their condemnation (Rom. ix. 1-5). It was far otherwise with Jesus. He was absolutely exempt from national limitations; so much so that Renan, arguing from the name of the province, *Gelil haggoyim*, "circle of the Gentiles," that the Galileans were a mixed race, declares it impossible "to ascertain what blood flowed in the veins of Him who has contributed most to efface the distinctions of blood in humanity." This is a perverse fancy unsustained by the actual facts and contradicted by St Paul's statement ἐξ ὧν ὁ Χριστὸς τὸ κατὰ σάρκα. Nevertheless it serves to emphasise an indubitable and very

remarkable circumstance. Jesus, though a Jew according to the flesh, was purely human. He recognised all mankind as children of God, owned kinship with all, whether Jews or Gentiles, who did the will of His Father, and pronounced Jerusalem not a whit more sacred than the mountain where the Samaritans worshipped. And all, whether Jews or Gentiles, drew to Him. He was, to employ an exquisite mistranslation, "the Desire of all nations," the Saviour for whom the hearts of men of every clime had all unconsciously been yearning, and in whom all the families of the earth are blessed.

Another noteworthy feature of the evangelic Jesus is *His attitude toward the opinions of His time, His singular detachment from current theories.* "One of the strongest pieces of objective evidence in favour of Christianity," says the late Dr G. J. Romanes,[1] "is not sufficiently enforced by apologists. Indeed I am not aware that I have ever seen it mentioned. It is the absence from the biograpy of Christ of any doctrines which the subsequent growth of human knowledge—whether in natural science, ethics, political economy, or elsewhere—has had to discount. This negative argument is really almost as strong as is the positive one from what Christ did teach. For when we consider what a large number of sayings

[1] *Thoughts on Religion*, p. 157.

are recorded of—or at least attributed to—Him, it becomes most remarkable that in literal truth there is no reason why any of His words should ever pass away in the sense of becoming obsolete.... Contrast Jesus Christ in this respect with other thinkers of like antiquity. Even Plato, who, though some four hundred years before Christ in point of time, was greatly in advance of Him in respect of philosophic thought, is nowhere in this respect as compared with Christ. Read the Dialogues, and see how enormous is the contrast with the Gospels in respect of errors of all kinds, reaching even to absurdity in respect of reason, and to sayings shocking to the moral sense. Yet this is confessedly the highest level of human reason on the lines of spirituality, when unaided by alleged revelation." Whatever be the explanation, the fact stands that, so far as the record goes, Jesus never uttered a sentence which entangled His teaching with any of the popular notions of His day, nor yet—more remarkable still—with any of the vexed questions of science or criticism which have since emerged. When the Inquisition condemned Galileo, it was not to the Gospels but to the Book of Joshua that they appealed in support of the Ptolemaic astronomy; when the evolutionary hypothesis was propounded, it was not with the teaching of our Lord but with the Book of Genesis that it seemed to conflict; and criticism

may assign what date or authorship it will to the Old Testament documents unchecked by a single pronouncement of Jesus.

It is impossible, however, to set forth in detail all the manifold wonder of the Evangelic Jesus. To approach that peerless picture is to find oneself in the presence of a unique and transcendent Personality, not a child of His time and people, but a Visitant from a loftier realm. "Jesus himself," says one so unbiassed by traditional reverence as Matthew Arnold,[1] "as he appears in the Gospels, and for the very reason that he is so manifestly above the heads of his reporters there, is, in the jargon of modern philosophy, an *absolute;* we cannot explain him, cannot get behind him and above him, cannot command him." Every other of the great ones of history may be analysed and the influences which went to the making of him distinguished; but Jesus defies analysis. He was not made nor even determined by His environment, else He would have been at every point the precise opposite of what He was. He was a debtor neither to Jew nor to Greek. His is the one perfectly original and absolutely self-determined life in history. He defies analysis and refuses classification. He will not be ranked under the common category of humanity.

Such is the Evangelic Jesus. What shall we

[1] Preface to *Literature and Dogma.*

say of Him? Must we not acknowledge Him as the Holy One of God, the Lord of men, the Saviour of the world? Immediately objections start up. It may be urged, in the first place, that *this conclusion presupposes the historicity of the evangelic narratives.*

No, remember our initial position. We set out with no prepossession in favour of the evangelic narratives and no prejudice against them, treating them all alike, and making no discrimination between the Fourth Gospel and the Synoptics. We examined them precisely as we might any ancient documents—say the Oxyrhynchus Papyri —which should come into our hands unrecommended either by divine authority or by traditional reverence. And we have discovered in them a matchless picture—One who lived out in human condition a life which transcends humanity, realises the ideal of divinity, satisfies the yearning of our hearts, and commands the adoration of our souls. We do not say with the late Mr T. H. Green[1] that here we have the highest ideal of the relation between God and man, and it matters not how it has arisen. We say rather that it is too wonderful to be the invention of any human mind and must be historical. The Evangelic Jesus is self-attesting. It is He that attests the narratives, not they that attest Him.

[1] *Works*, vol. iii. p. 242.

It is incredible that that Divine Life should be a mere dream. The man who conceived it must have been himself divine. It would have needed a Jesus to invent Jesus. Pfleiderer has propounded a theory that St Paul was the creator of Christianity. This is his method: He first ascertains from the recognised Epistles the Apostle's conception of Christianity, and then proceeds to demonstrate that it is reflected in the evangelic narratives. It is not the Jesus of history that the Evangelists pourtray, but the Christ of the Pauline theology.[1] The answer is simple and direct: If St Paul were indeed the creator of the Evangelic Jesus, then St Paul was immeasurably greater than we have ever suspected. Ere he could conceive such an ideal, he must have been himself divine, and it remains that we should transfer to him the adoration which we have accorded to Jesus.

It is inconceivable that the Evangelic Jesus should be a creation, whether of some master mind or of the myth-forming genius of the primitive Church. Humanity cannot transcend itself. Surely scepticism has its credulity no less than faith when it is gravely maintained that so radiant an ideal arose "among nearly the most degraded generation of the most narrow-minded race that the world has ever known, and made it

[1] *Urchristenthum*, S. 520.

the birthplace of a new earth."[1] The mere fact that there dawned on the world, and that in a land barren of wisdom and an age morally bankrupt, an ideal which has been the wonder and inspiration of mankind for more than sixty generations, is an irrefragable evidence that it is no mere ideal but an historic fact. The Divine Life which the Evangelists pourtray must have been actually lived out on the earth, else they could never have conceived it.

And thus the Evangelic Jesus is Himself the supreme evidence at once of the historicity of the evangelic narratives and of His own Divinity. "For me," says St Ignatius,[2] "the archives are Jesus Christ, the inviolable archives His Cross and Death and His Resurrection and the Faith that is through Him." No criticism can shake this sure foundation. It may be that the Gospels contain inaccuracies and inconsistencies—though it were well for such as love to dwell on these to consider Rothe's warning against the perversity which, "in examining the sun-spots, misses the sun." It may be that the Evangelists were liable to err and subject to the deflections of contemporary opinion and personal prejudice—though the more one studies their writings the surer does one grow that, untenable as every theory of inspiration may be, some singular aid must have been vouchsafed

[1] Hutton, *Theol. Ess.*, p. 290. [2] *Ep. ad Philad.* viii. 2.

to those unlearned men who "carried so much æther in their souls." It will hardly be disputed by any intelligent believer in the Divinity of our blessed Lord that He was imperfectly comprehended and inadequately represented by His biographers. What human mind could perfectly comprehend, what human hand adequately depict, the vision of His glory? It is impossible to gainsay such contentions, but they may be the more cheerfully allowed inasmuch as they furnish a considerable argument for the historicity of the evangelic narratives and the Divinity of Him they tell of. The fact that Jesus is "so manifestly above the heads of His reporters" is a conclusive evidence that, when they wrote of Him, they were not composing a work of the imagination but relating in all honesty and simplicity "things which they had seen and heard." And the very imperfection of their narratives is an involuntary testimony to His ineffable glory. When every deduction has been made, the Evangelic Jesus remains a wondrous picture. Blurred as it may be by reason of the unskilfulness of the artists, it is still a picture limned in light of One fairer than the children of men; and if a picture painted by weak human hands be so transcendently beautiful, what must have been the glory of the Divine Original?

It may be objected again that, *even if the*

historicity of the evangelic narratives be allowed, Jesus may be accounted for on naturalistic principles. He is, it may be alleged, simply the Perfect Man, the first we know of and perhaps the only one who has realised the sacred ideal of humanity. He was a man with a unique genius for religion, and He stands pre-eminent in His department precisely as Michelangelo and Shakspeare in theirs.

Surely, however, it is fatal to this theory that Jesus appeared when He did in the course of human history. Were He simply the Perfect Man, He would still present an insoluble problem. For, according to the law of evolution, the Perfect Man should appear late as the consummation of humanity's long development. His appearance midway, and that in a decadent race and a period of universal corruption, were wholly inexplicable. It were strangely premature. His advent should be still far off, the goal toward which upward-aspiring humanity is still tending and ever more nearly approaching. Were He but the Perfect Man, Jesus would be as one born out of due time, as the ripe ear in the season of the green blade.

Neither is He merely the supreme religious genius. Though Michelangelo and Shakspeare stand unrivalled in art and poetry, others also have been great, though in lesser measure, and have not owned them as their masters or inspirers.

But all the saints during these sixty generations have looked up to Jesus, have derived their holiness from Him, and have confessed that it was His grace alone which made them what they were. He is not simply the supreme religious genius, but the Saviour who, on their own confession, has lifted sinners out of the mire and transformed them into saints. It were indeed rash to affirm that but for Jesus there would have been no saints during these nigh two thousand years; nevertheless it is a fact that every saint who has lived upon the earth and made it sweeter by his presence, has owned Jesus as his Lord and found peace and hope in Him alone. Appeal to the experts. Their judgment is final. And the saints are the experts here.

And thus we turn aside from the strife of criticism and, with quiet assurance, rest our souls on Jesus as on a strong foundation which stands firm amid the removing of the things that are shaken. "For another foundation can no man lay than the one that hath been laid, which is Jesus Christ." The recognition of Jesus as the manifestation of the Eternal God is the end of all controversy.

> "I say, the acknowledgment of God in Christ,
> Accepted by thy reason, solves for thee
> All questions in the earth and out of it." [1]

[1] Browning, *A Death in the Desert*.

It settles every dispute. Is it the existence of God that is disputed? Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, *Dei inaspecti aspectabilis imago.* Is it immortality that is doubted? He has given us His word for it: "If it were not so, I would have told you"; and He is the King of Eternity, who knows the wonders of that undiscovered country, and who came and dwelt among us and told us glad tidings of it. Is it miracles that are objected to? Jesus is Himself the Miracle of miracles; and, in view of the transcendent miraculousness of His sinless humanity,[1] it were foolish to cavil at the lesser miracles which the Evangelists record. It is no marvel that Jesus should have wrought miracles; the marvel were rather if, being what He was, He had not. Once He is seen in His wonder and glory, faith is absolutely inevitable.

The truth is that the objects of faith do not admit of demonstration. "All first principles even of scientific facts," says Romanes,[2] "are known by intuition and not by reason. No one can deny this. Now if there be a God, the fact is certainly of the nature of a first principle; for it must be the first of all first principles. No one can dispute this. No one can therefore dispute the necessary conclusion that, if there be a God, He is knowable (if knowable at all) by intuition

[1] Bruce, *Hum. of Chr.*, p. 208, n. 1: "A *sinless* Christ is as great a miracle as a Christ who can walk on the water."

[2] *Thoughts on Religion*, p. 146.

and not by reason." So long as faith rests on demonstration, it can never be more than a probability, and must lie at the mercy of every subtle logomachist. That is a significant confession of one of the interlocuters in Cicero's *Tusculan Disputations* that, while he was reading Plato's *Phædo*, he felt sure of the immortality of the soul, but, whenever he laid the dialogue aside, his belief slipped away from him. And this is the priceless service that Jesus has rendered to our souls, which were made for God and are restless until they find rest in Him, that He has lifted faith for ever out of the domain of reason into that of intuition, and has made it sure and abiding for every one who has eyes to behold His glory and a heart to understand and welcome His love.

THE ANSWER OF IDEALISM TO AGNOSTICISM IN RELATION TO THE PERSON OF CHRIST, by the Rev. JAMES ROBERTSON CAMERON, M.A., Glasgow.

THE ANSWER OF IDEALISM TO AGNOSTICISM IN RELATION TO THE PERSON OF CHRIST

The aim of this paper by request is to relate the ideas of it to the problem of the Person of Christ, which is at once the most personal and pressing problem of the present; and it cannot be discussed in even a partial way, which is all that is attempted here, without the aid of "divine philosophy." One may be permitted at the outset to explain that the standpoint taken in this paper is the standpoint of Idealism as it is found more or less in the writings of the late Master of Balliol, Dr Edward Caird, the great and revered teacher of philosophy up till recent years within these academic halls. The days when one was borne as upon the wings of the morning to his class-room, close to this, are days which one can never recall without profound feelings of gratitude, and what one owes to his persuasive eloquence and to his lofty mind and character is more than one can tell. For the sake of others one would fain invoke his "so potent art" and summon out of the vanished years the voice, the look, the language, with which he held us spellbound in those burning hours of early thought.

It is the conviction of many that what is called the transcendental movement in philosophy, which Kant may be said to have introduced, so far from being spent, is as real a factor as science itself in the trend of thought in our age, and is indispensable as a means of attaining to that rational faith in Christian facts which it becomes us to attain. The movement has issued in Idealism, not, it may be admitted, in any full or final system of Idealism, for this has not been achieved, but in the Idealistic standpoint, the Idealistic spirit, the spirit which permeates the highest art and poetry of the past century. It has issued in a spirit more than in a system, but if any one would trace the growth of the modern spirit and understand the principles involved in it, one must needs begin with Kant, and to begin with Kant is to continue with Hegel, and to end with Idealism or the Idealistic standpoint represented by the British Idealists. It is not too much to say that to know Kant before and after is to know the modern spirit, its point of view, its note, its atmosphere, its uniqueness, of which we find as valid because as vital witnesses in art, literature, and music. The same spirit which we find at least beginning to be in Kant's Critiques, pervading Hegel's Dialectic and philosophic thought since Hegel, we find in the thoughts of Goethe, the dreams of Coleridge, the prophetic insights of Wordsworth, the haunting melodies

of Wagner, the luminous landscapes of Turner and François Millet, and the work of Watts, Tennyson, and Browning. Must we not admit that amid all this variety of men and minds there is a certain subtle likeness, the presence of something which knits them together,—a sense of vision and nearness to the spiritual world, a sort of divination that the truth of things is to be found in the Divine Immanence? One might have spent some time upon this fascinating theme, and have tried to prove the existence of an element not found in the Italian Art of the Renaissance, or in the literature of the Elizabethan period, or any other period, but found in those seers and singers of a later day, a new attitude and way of looking at and feeling things, a new spirit which Wordsworth expressed in epoch-making words like these:—

> "And I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts: a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused."

A sense sublime of something far more deeply interfused is the superscription, as one might say, to be written over our age. It expresses, as adequately perhaps as words can do, the point of view or spirit which gives distinction to our age, and which, so far as it can be expressed in philo-

sophical terms, is best of all expressed in those of Constructive Idealism.

Philosophy is as vital and valid an activity as any of the activities of the human personality, and if we would know our age we must know not its literature and art alone, but also its philosophy. It is an error to suppose that philosophy is a sort of mere guesswork, airy speculation, as it were, out of all relation to the practical concerns of life. An embodiment of the mind of man so perennial as philosophy is no more likely to vanish before the march of science than the mind itself. Philosophy is as necessary to science as science is to philosophy and as both are to man, and probably it is true to say that in the various philosophies known to history there is to be found "the clearest indication of the relation in which successive stages of society stand to one another." No doubt in one sense every philosophy has been refuted; it has passed away with the age of which it was the reflection. But in another sense "every philosophy has been and still is necessary," a stage in the evolution of the one philosophy unfolding itself in the philosophies. For there is no staying of the impulse in man that makes him feel after if haply he may find the One. So that if from one point of view the history of philosophy may seem to present the spectacle of a pathway strewn with

the "images of broken gods," the fragments of "our little systems" which have ceased to be, yet from another it is the exhibition of a continuous process in which the one philosophy beneath all philosophies gradually comes to be. There is nothing that points more conclusively to the truth of the theory which Idealism maintains than the perpetual quest of the human mind after Reality. That perpetual quest is meaningless unless it is founded on the faith that Reality is knowable. With the Unknowable philosophy can have nothing to do save only as a stage on the way to a higher point of view. Set up the Unknowable as an ultimate principle and you pull down philosophy; its whole function withers beneath the negation. The secret of the survival of philosophy, which is just the speculative impulse in man, as of all serious science and conduct, lies in what Hegel calls trust in Providence, trust, that is to say, in the inherent rationality of the universe. It has not all been wasted labour, the labour of the thinkers on the first and last things. There has been advance in the statement as well as in the solution of the problem, and certain definite results have been achieved and lie embedded in language and literature, in habits, tendencies, presuppositions of thought and belief. Unconsciously men think in the forms and talk in the terms of reason, and if they were to trace the history thereof they would

find themselves upon a pathway stretching back into the past, and into the presence of the men who stood at the turning-points and shaped the course. It is only indeed since the historic spirit was born and began to work among ideas that men have begun to see how intricate is their growth and how subtle are the links that bind them together. And at its touch, as at the touch of some magic key, all the past is giving up its treasure, a treasure which, far from being a mere confusion of tongues, is found to be a continuous process of discussion, "a dialectic movement running through the ages."

Now as it is of importance that we should understand the attitude of the historic spirit, for this purpose we may compare it briefly with two other attitudes which men have taken towards the past. There is first the attitude of submission to authority, the most notable example of which is scholasticism, where discussion moves within the lines of some master-mind or creed which has come to be regarded almost as divine. The second attitude is that of revolt against authority, the claim of independence in thought represented by Bacon, Descartes, Locke, and Kant. They all profess to make a fresh beginning, putting out of sight the things that are behind. But there is no escape from the past simply by ignoring it. It could be shown in every case, by an examination

of their thought, how that in this or that notion or assumption, slipping in as if by stealth, the past inevitably asserts itself. There is escape from the past only if we take up not an attitude of revolt from, but of sympathy with, it, seeking to appreciate the connexion of ideas with their antecedents, and finding in the history of them the judgment of them. The history of ideas is both their judgment and their justification. Thus a doctrine condemned as inadequate for to-day may at the same time, in relation to its own epoch and the circumstances of its origin, be seen to have its fitting place. Although we cannot now express our thought in the terms, for example, of the scholastic philosophy, yet we may discern in them a suitable medium for the ideas of the Middle Ages. Dry and dead as that type of philosophy seems to-day, nevertheless on closer scrutiny it turns out to be full of the strange interests and yearnings of its age, and it is possible to see in it something of the same elaboration of design, and patience, and skill of construction as are to be seen in the abbeys and cathedrals which about the same time were erected in Northern Europe. So if we cannot adopt the dualism of Descartes and Kant, or Locke's notion of the passivity of mind, that need not prevent us admitting the vast debt which modern thought owes to them, a debt which can only be appreciated from the standpoint of the

historic spirit. For from that point of view it is impossible merely to condemn their thinking on account of its mistakes without allowing that it contains elements of truth, and has its place in the process by which the human mind advances to its goal and in which our own thinking is included.

Two things may be said to have worked together to establish the historic spirit. The one is the progress of science by the application to the facts within its province of the categories of organism and evolution, and the other is the philosophical method associated with the name of Hegel. No philosophy has so often been condemned for being *a priori* woven out of fiction, not of facts, but the truth is that no philosophy has its roots struck so deep in the soil of history. "On the whole," says Hegel, "the sequence of the philosophical systems is similar to the sequence of the categories." In seeking to arrange the conceptions of our ordinary and scientific thinking in their logical order, Hegel finds traces of a kindred movement in the speculative labour of the mind in history. Like the earliest categories in relation to the latest, the earliest philosophies are the poorest and most abstract, leading to the richer and the more concrete.

Thus, if Hegel's logic is the outcome of a profound knowledge of history, it in turn suggests a new method of dealing with history, the method

of development. To that method, science in its own domain has set its seal, but in the hands of the philosopher, it is carried farther, and is applied to all the aspects of experience, their meaning or truth being found in the process of their growth. No one detected and absorbed so fully as Hegel the new interest in history, the new trend of thought and sentiment towards the past which we find, *e.g.*, in Goethe and Sir Walter Scott, and which marks the transition from the eighteenth to the nineteenth century. It meant the application of new categories in room of those of the "unhistorical rationalism" of the preceding age, and of this new interest and these new categories there is the fullest philosophical interpretation in the system of Hegel. His method is the genetic, the attitude of which in relation to the past is neither that of blind submission nor of negative revolt but of sympathetic appreciation. It is not destructive but essentially reconstructive; it aims not merely to expound the "tradition of the fathers," nor merely to expose the inconsistencies of later teaching, but to deal with thoughts and thinkers in the light of their historical environment, as they are related to their own age, and to give them their necessary place in the one continuous development in time. In that development there is something of the nature of a logical process, the systems which are less developed, like the categories which are less adequate

and issue in the more adequate, leading on of necessity to systems more developed, the former being at once corrected, and conserved so far as they are true in the latter. Thus what is true in them is not lost, but is taken up and transformed in the larger truth to which every fragment of truth contributes, and of which it forms a part. The method is truly reconstructive. It does not adopt without adapting the inheritance with which it deals. It is critical because it is reconstructive. It is critical in a way like that in which the blossom is critical of the bud, and the bud of the thorn on which it was born. Every new attempt to attain the Ultimate is both a criticism of the old and a reconstruction of it; every attempt, whether old or new, being a manifestation of the tendency to order and unity which, according to Idealism, is immanent in thought and things. There is a dialectic movement in life, higher forms recapitulating lower forms, and a dialectic movement in thought upon the things of life, and neither is subversive, but each is constructive or reconstructive. Such is the method of Idealism based as Idealism itself upon the faith in the ultimate rationality of the universe. That reality is knowable by us is of the essence of Idealism, the principle which dominates and directs its method, and its method is the one that marches with the historic spirit. To sum up, the historic spirit,

which is admittedly the spirit of our time, and of which the scientific spirit is one aspect, and the method which it applies to everything with which it deals and which is the method of the idealistic philosophy,—all this hangs upon the fundamental principle that the real world is the ideal, and the ideal world is the real, that in other words Reality is intelligible; the Mind of the universe is essentially one with the mind of man. Or to use again the poet's burning words—

> "Something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky and in the mind of man:
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things."

Now that is the Idealistic contention, a contention or principle which involves the whole transcendental movement of thought as well as the development of science and historic criticism; and that you may see it is the one principle that justifies the faith which is presupposed in each and all of these activities, one must needs refer for a moment to Kant, who, so far at least as philosophy is concerned, may be said to have introduced our present age and its prevailing type of thought. He, more than any other, is the pioneer of the time in which we live. Modern Agnosticism has

its source in him as well as modern Idealism, and no one did more than he to effect the transition from the one to the other. He succeeded in throwing into the discussion just those ideas which showed how Agnosticism might be corrected and completed by Idealism, though he never succeeded in overcoming the Dualism involving Agnosticism inherent in his theory of knowledge, a defect which has had such wide results in later thought. Two things Kant shows to his own satisfaction, (*a*) that thought and sense are the elements of knowledge, and (*b*) that thought is of such a nature and sense of such a nature that the knowing self which brings them together is only negatively related to the self of pure thought, the self which thinks its own identity, and is so limited by the material of sense that it can never be at one with it. Thus the self which says "I think" and the self which says "I know" are separated, and the world as known is but a world of phenomena for ever parted from the world of noumena, the world as thought. "I think" stands over and above "I know"; Reality is sundered from appearance. The Dualism meets us everywhere in the first Critique, and there you find the starting-point of modern Agnosticism. But it is in his brilliant glimpses and insights into something deeper than a Dualism that we see the greatness of Kant. Thus though he separates the self of thought from the self of knowledge, he shows that

the former is nothing except as conditioned by the latter. It is empty but for the process of knowledge, *i.e.* the consciousness of self is nothing apart from the consciousness of things. If that be so, then the elements of knowledge are constituted otherwise than as a Dualism of thought and sense; knowledge ceases to be merely the synthesis of thought upon the given material of sense, and the unity of self-consciousness becomes a principle which turns knowledge of phenomena into knowledge of noumena, *i.e.* Reality. One does not claim that Kant himself attained to this position, which is the Idealistic position, though it seemed to be always at his side like some invisible guide throwing in suggestions which some of his followers apprehended better than he did himself. Kant himself failed to find the common ground between phenomena and noumena, appearance and reality; he failed to see in self-conciousness a unity great enough to transcend the Dualism. He was still bound in a sense to the old formal logic, and persisted in treating self-consciousness as a pure abstract unity standing over against the process of knowledge, which in going beyond itself to determine objects is going away from itself. But inasmuch as Kant made the admission that the pure "analytic" unity is only possible through the "synthetic" unity, or that the consciousness of self is only possible through the consciousness of

objects, it is possible to work out the admission into the doctrine that self-consciousness, instead of being a mere abstract transcendental unity, is immanent in knowledge, the source not of the opposition but of the connexion of appearance and reality—an essentially synthetic principle underlying the consciousness of objects, and through them realising its unity with itself.

No Idealist can forget that Kant was the first to establish, even if he did it only negatively, the great principle that the unity of self is presupposed in all our knowledge, though at the same time no Idealist must forget that according to Kant the unity of self is so conceived as that it can never realise its ideal in the world of objects. That ideal can never be realised by knowledge but only by faith. Here we touch the second Critique, where the negative conclusion of the first changes into a positive. Kant's great aim in the first was to show not merely that noumena are unknowable and knowledge is only of phenomena, but chiefly that our moral consciousness and its objects are raised above the conditions, the empirical conditions of nature and necessity under which alone knowledge is possible. To limit knowledge to phenomena, said Kant, is to make room for faith. You cannot know the real world, you can only think it and believe in it. I cannot proceed any further in the second or third Critique; it

is enough to have seen even in a partial way where and how modern agnosticism begins to be, and how out of the mouth of its originator himself it is to be corrected and developed as Hegel and others have developed it through their deeper apprehension of the relation of mind to things. The way to Idealism can be found only through a reconstruction of Kant's Agnosticism, such a reconstruction as we find suggested in Caird's great volumes on Kant, and which consists in an exhibition of the principle that the self in knowing at all knows Reality, knows it in virtue of the immanence in its knowing as in all its other activities of the Absolute Spirit, the ultimate Reality. "The whole problem of our lives, the problem of practice no less than the problem of the theory, is made insoluble if we begin by assuming the absoluteness of the difference between the self and the not-self, and only then ask how are we to mediate between them. If this were really the question, it could not be answered, but neither could it ever have arisen for us as a question at all. If, therefore, any one bases his theory on a presupposed dualism of subject and object, we may fairly ask how he comes to believe in it; and this is a question which he cannot answer at all without treating the difference as a relative one. But if it be so, the common notion that the Absolute, the ultimate reality, the Divine, or by whatever name we choose to name it, is a far-off

something, a *Jenseits* or transcendental 'thing in itself' involves a fundamental mistake. And it is no less a mistake to suppose, with Mr Spencer, that it is a mere indeterminate basis of consciousness of which we can say nothing except that it is. It must be regarded as a principle of unity which is present in all things and beings, and from which they in their utmost possible independence cannot be separated. It must be conceived, in short, as that in which they 'live and move and have their being.'"[1]

It is not unfortunately possible here to show how this principle took shape and form in Hegel's Logic and in the work of those who followed him and improved on it. I think that in spite of all his faults we owe to Hegel the magnificent affirmation of the Divine Immanence which runs through his whole system, that being no mere idea flung out as from a poet's ecstasy, but a principle reached by the most extensive knowledge and the keenest criticism. In Kant's doctrine God was regarded in the extreme Deistic fashion of the eighteenth century, as external to the life of man and merely as a means, it would appear, of connecting happiness and virtue. In Hegel's view, on the other hand, "the throb of religious emotion in the humblest breast has nothing less than an infinite value because it is, and in so far as it is, the

[1] *Idealism and the Theory of Knowledge* (from the Proceedings of the British Academy, Vol. I.), by Dr. Edward Caird.

gathering up into one consciousness of the whole meaning of life." And as another puts it, "the absolute certitude of religion that man can work effectually because all the universe is working with him, or in other words because God is working in him, can find its explanation and defence only in a philosophy for which the real is the rational and the rational is the real."

I am sensible of leaving a very great deal unsaid in this brief attempt to expound the main principle of Idealism in its relation to Agnosticism, but I leave it to your own inquiring minds to fill up the silent gaps, and proceed to say that not only do the facts of science demand a unifying principle like the Idealistic, but it is demanded also by the one effective method of historical criticism, viz., the genetic. Only if historical criticism can base itself on such a positive and reconciling principle can it deal aright with the thoughts and thinkers of the past. Ritschl, Harnack, Sabatier, and they of that school or persuasion, clinging to Kant's negative theory of knowledge, take up an attitude which is destructive, not reconstructive, the effect of which is that they do less than justice to the development of Christian doctrine or to the evolution of the Christian idea. For an effective method has more to do than merely to expose the inconsistencies and contradictions that are to be

found in the writings of the New Testament, and in the different periods of Christian reflection, or merely to condemn them on the plea of an "essence" or "kernel" of Christianity supposed to be primitive and permanent. Rather it has to deal with these writings and periods in the light of their historical antecedents and environment, seeking to appreciate both the lines along which and the limits within which thinkers and communities strove to make the person of Jesus intelligible to themselves and others. To such a method, which is critical and reconstructive alike, nothing that refers to Jesus is common or unclean, nor is anything too sacred to be violated by its touch. To it Jesus is not the monopoly of one age and not of another. Just as the question of the ultimate nature of things is not the question of one but of every age, so the question of the Person of Jesus persists from one age to another, a Person dominating the lives as well as a problem fascinating the minds of men. And just as it is not in the one answer to the problem of philosophy but in the many we find the dialectic movement of human thought, so it is in the many interpretations of Jesus we catch the truth and value of His Person. The historical method does not set them up the one against the other as mutually destructive, nor does it try to make of them an artificial harmony, nor does it defer to any one as though it were

original and fixed, and all the rest a lapse from it, but it treats them one and all as the necessary attempts of representative minds to express in forms congenial to their age their attitude to Jesus, to sum up in some supreme conception of His Person their appreciation of the change wrought in their experience, and that of others, by the impact of His life and teaching, which conception may be said to embody their conception of the world in general. Moreover, the historical method, whilst it teaches us to see in these conceptions lofty products of the human spirit, teaches us also to see that they are parts of a process, and that therefore we are not bound to them as to something final or infallible, but must find for ourselves a conception of Jesus in harmony both with the growing mind and the changing forms of our own time. Only if Jesus had ceased to be a fact seething in the minds of men might the traditional serve, but merely as some Egyptian sarcophagus all finely figured serves to enshrine the dead. Manifestly it is impossible for us, standing where we do in the process, to embody the soul and goal of our life in the symbols, *e.g.*, of early Jewish Christianity, or indeed in any of the forms, priceless though they be, that meet us in the New Testament. It is now but a commonplace to say that the primitive Christian writers were not mere reporters, the mere passive scribes

of unalterable facts, and that their writings do not show that photographic accuracy which our fathers vexed themselves to find in them; but that being children of their age as well as followers of Jesus, they used the language and learning of their age, reflecting, often unconsciously reflecting, its various tendencies, interests, oppositions, as they strove to reproduce their thoughts of Christ. Concentration upon His Person and work—this is characteristic of the writers of the New Testament, and gives to it its unity, but there its unity stops; all else is variety testifying to the extraordinary ferment caused by His coming, and the sovereign sway which He obtained over the avenues of thought and the activities of life existing in the three great civilisations of the time. Nothing is more significant than the way in which these three great civilisations, with all that was true in them, seemed to draw together as into a kind of vast combine to bear His message and meaning to the world. They were the three Magi that brought their treasures not only to His Cradle but His Cross. The birth and death of such a Being had to be made intelligible, which was only possible through such forms as had their part and lot in the environment of the time in which the early Christians lived. Men could not but speak of Him in terms which were steeped in the traditions of the past and the associations of the present.

And through these they had to body forth the fact of Jesus, a fact which demanded a rearrangement of all existing moral, social, intellectual relations. Now as the same fact is the dominating fact of our time, necessity is laid upon us also to make it intelligible, to relate it to the other facts in the teeming world of our experience. And we can only attempt to do this by means of the terms, categories, symbols, organic to our age. These have all their history, but though they are related to, they are necessarily different from, those of the primitive Christian thinkers and apologists. Our gaze may be as firmly fixed on Jesus as was theirs, but we do not gaze with the same eyes or see Him quite as they saw Him. They saw Him swathed about with miracle, His hands and feet, His coming and His going encircled with the halo of the marvellous; we too may see Him as a wonder-worker, whose name is 'Wonderful, Counsellor;' that name indeed may to us have even more of content and significance than it had to them, seeing that we behold Him in the gathered light of twenty centuries. But we are scarcely able now to define what a miracle is or conceive of the necessity of interpositions into and interruptions of the sublime order of the universe to prove the presence of the Divine in it, when, as Idealism tells us—

> "Earth's crammed with heaven,
> And every common bush afire with God."

Their view of God demanded the miraculous. Untaught in the law of evolution, they looked for God in the unexpected, the unusual, the strange, in what reversed the even tenor of their way and their world. "Howbeit, we know this man whence he is, but when Christ cometh no man knoweth whence he is." That expresses an attitude, a point of view shared in both by those who opposed and those who accepted Christ. It was as we may say organic to their time, part of the habit, the furniture, the inheritance of their minds. And it only shows how all-compelling was the force of the personality of Jesus that His works were naturally lifted up into the region of the supernatural. The main matter is the personality which so captivated and convinced the first disciples that they could not choose but express their minds in tales of miracle—ascribing to their Lord a mastery over nature before which the winds and waters sank to rest, and "there was a great calm," and over human nature so that demons and diseases of the will were overcome and they beheld him that was possessed "clothed and in his right mind." We may still fully admit His mastery over nature as over human nature in and through the power of will, the power of pure spirit reigning in Him and raying forth and further than ever before or since into the obscure regions of what we call the material, and which, be it

what it may, is organic, plastic, docile to the spiritual. With the passing away of the old dualism betwixt matter and spirit, a vast new domain as it were has been opened for the interaction of forces whose secrets are no longer supposed to be at the call of demons but under the control of universal law. And with the opening of that domain the category of the miraculous as such has been transmuted into a category which is higher and which preserves the truth to which it gave expression. The truth to which it gave expression was that of the unique overmastering Personality of Jesus, and we may see that truth as clearly as, if not more clearly than, those of the first age, though we live in an age remote from it and are forced to use a category that brings the miraculous within the reign of law or teaches us to wait for evidence that will. By this method we lose nothing of the Personality that rules the centuries, but we gain a conception that makes Him the Jesus, not merely of the yesterdays, but of to-day. We lose nothing, but gain all.

And the same method or principle of criticism, which is essentially a principle of reconstruction, may be applied to the whole tradition, both of Christ's first coming and His second. From which it follows that we may preserve all that the tradition enshrines, even if we crave for a form or

forms more congenial to our age, and to the same tremendous fact which meets and appeals to us now, the fact of the personality of Christ. The faith of the first Christians was born of an inner experience gradually wrought in them by contact with the mind and spirit of Jesus, an experience which made them feel that the life He lived and imparted to them was a divine life. Not at first did they come to the conclusion that He was the Messiah, but they had their own wistful thoughts and imaginings which, as time wore on, grew and gathered into the confession, "Thou art the Christ." One day at Cæsarea Philippi, as we are told, He stood unveiled before their eyes, the long pent-up secret of their hope and the unadmitted secret of His soul calling to each other as deep calling unto deep and culminating in a Beatitude to which we may say the whole tradition and doctrine of the New Testament, and indeed the whole process of Christian theology, attempt to give expression, "Thou art the Christ." . . . "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven."

Having reached that fundamental truth which thereafter was burned into their being by a strange curriculum of events, Gethsemane, Calvary, Olivet, Pentecost and after, their next and necessary step was to apply it so as to account for and explain the origin of Christ

and His death and destiny alike. And what if, because of the inevitable wear and tear of time, the forms which they were bound to use to express their faith, do not now avail, does that mean, as negative criticism would have us to believe, that they are discredited and worthless and may be cast as rubbish to the void? So far from that being so, we, if we use our method aright, will be able to conserve all that is true and essential in them; the forms may pass but the substance and the soul abides. That was our Lord's own method. Nothing is more marked than the way in which He handled the ancient law, moving amongst its hoary forms with perfect freedom, selecting and rejecting as He required, and reinterpreting the whole in the light of a new experience. "I am not come to destroy but to fulfil." It is the method of a new order by which all that is of value in the old is preserved and readapted to a new environment. And the same method—at once critical and reconstructive—is found in the writings of the New Testament itself. In these writings as in the teaching of Jesus the inner personal experience is prior to the adoption of the most befitting forms, and as might be expected they are not few but many. That they are many shows what a widespread preparation, intellectual, moral, religious, had been made for the advent of such a Being as Christ, and with what an imperial sweep the spiritual movement launched by Him drew to itself the scattered rays of light

in other lands, and wrought them like an aureole about His Cradle and His Cross. Thus though the tradition of the Birth drops out of the system of Paul and vanishes from the thought of John, it is not absent because either of these or their audience has a less lofty view of Jesus; rather it is possible to see in their language a further stage of the process of idealising, which is the process of realising, the object of their faith. Under the all-compelling inspiration of the Person of their Lord we see them feeling out after the largest, grandest, most comprehensive categories of their own and other times, Paul with his Man from Heaven, John with his Logos, bent on interpreting the infinite truth and appreciating the infinite value of His Person. But as we can see, even these their chosen forms break down beneath the stress of their emotion and belief. The new wine bursts the old bottles. Hence in our criticism of the theologies of Paul and John we must bear in mind what not a few forget, that the main thing is ever the inner personal experience adopting and adapting pre-existing ideas, and filling them with a richer content than was possible in the Greek or Jewish world from which they came. It may be well and right to know all we can of Jewish-Greek philosophy, especially of the Logos idea, blending as it does the highest religious speculations both of Jews and Greeks, but we err if we imagine that by understanding it

as it is found among them we thereby understand it as applied to Jesus. It is inevitably transformed in the process of being applied to Jesus. The truth is that His Person was too rich, too vast, too profound for that idea or any idea fully to express. It is one of the wonders of His Person that it exhausts all forms but is exhausted by none. Hence although at the time no form served so adequately as that of the Logos to articulate the supremacy of Christ, yet it bears too many marks of its dualistic origin to meet the needs of the age in which we live. At the same time it has still its incalculable worth for us as transmitting the highest judgment formed of Jesus in the most creative period of the Christian era, though it does not claim infallible authority on that account. And we can appreciate its immense significance without binding ourselves to it as an all-sufficient form. We live in a new environment, and if we aim, as we must, at other forms, it is not because the Jewish-Christian, or the Jewish-Greek, or the Pauline, or the Johannine are false, but simply because they are inadequate to express all that the majestic Figure of the Nazarene has become and means to us after reigning "in the midst" for twenty centuries. Our attitude to them is not destructive but reconstructive, like Jesus' attitude to the law of Sinai. And the more truly we appreciate the spirit and needs and outlook of our age and its connexion with that one immortal Face which "far from

vanish rather grows," the more freely shall we be able to move among the ideas of the New Testament, and whilst examining and sifting them conserve the vital elements of truth within them. One could wish indeed that in our day there were the fire and the faith at hand to reproduce in fitting phrase the triumphant soul of the New Testament life.

It would have been a welcome task at this point to have made one's way through the theology of Paul with its vision and argument, and perchance have seen into and grasped something of its message to his age and ours, and through the related theology of John with its wonderful blend of history and mysticism. Suffice it to say that great as the difference is betwixt the Jesus of the fourth Evangel and the Jesus of the other three, there is nevertheless a fundamental unity, inasmuch as the process which under the inspiration of faith began in the Synoptics to pass beyond the limits of actual history and almost transcended them in Paul, returns in the fourth to find the Christ of faith in the Jesus of Judea. The pre-existent Word made flesh not only to accomplish a death of obedience on the cross but to finish a work of service on the earth—this, as John presents it, is an appreciation of the fact of Jesus which not only rounds off the New Testament but forms the last and highest response of the faith of the primitive Church to the "I am"[1] of Jesus uttered on the

[1] Mark xiv. 62.

night before His death. Nothing loftier, nothing more authoritative ever fell from Jesus' lips than the "I am." It "reverberates" through the New Testament. We hear it in the storm on the sea and on the gentle hillside where He spake the Beatitudes. We hear it at Cæsarea Philippi and in the Upper Room and on the way to Calvary. The New Testament is but a series of echoes of or rather responses to that one commanding claim. All the Christologies are based upon it and are various renderings of it. And we in our day cannot afford to forget any one of these Christologies, these attempts of Christ-uplifted souls to reproduce the most ancient Christian creed, which is indeed the only Christian creed. "Thou art the Christ." We can neither bind ourselves to them nor brush them aside, for not only are they grey with age and sacred, but they are the fruits of that essential faith which Jesus hailed when He said, "Blessed art thou . . . for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." That is to say, they are the fruits of revelation, and you cannot destroy revelation: you must fulfil it. Hence just in the measure in which we in our age are willing through purity of heart and humility of mind to receive the revelation from above, appropriating and repeating for ourselves the confession of the first "Thou art the Christ," shall we be able freely and not slavishly to use the

forms of the past, to utter the faith of the present. Faith always speaks in the present tense, "Thou art," and its forms must therefore be the forms of the present time. And the forms which are most congenial to the time and the most capable of articulating its faith would seem to be those of Idealism. Christian theology to-day must work hand in hand with Idealism. Surely the forms of our time are not less adequate than the Pauline, or the Alexandrian, or the Johannine to express the creed of creeds. Just as Christ took possession of the highest thought of the ancient world, so He must take possession of the highest thought and science of the modern world. Our task therefore is marked out for us. First by simplicity of faith, which is response to the inward thrill of revelation, to see it and say it, "Thou art the Christ," and then in terms, in forms, in categories that reflect the highest knowledge, art, philosophy of our day to express that faith so as to make it a rational faith, a faith reasonable to others and furthering righteousness. Our task is to let men see what the New Testament saw and said in everlasting phrase—"And the Word became Flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

AGNOSTICISM IN DOGMA, METHOD AND LIFE, by the REV. P. CARNEGIE SIMPSON, M.A., Glasgow.

AGNOSTICISM IN DOGMA, METHOD AND LIFE

When I look at this comprehensive title I am somewhat abashed, for what I am going to give you is little more than a simple and hastily prepared talk.[1] The title indicates three phases of Agnosticism. In its modern sense, Agnosticism began by being a dogma. Then it was treated not as a dogma but rather as a rule of reason. Now it is with many persons a view of life, and means, one might say, a mental atmosphere producing a certain type of character. Spencer represents it in the first doctrinal phase. To him it stood as the article of a creed — the creed, namely, that the Absolute, or what we more popularly call God, exists, but is, and in the nature of the case, must be utterly unknowable. Huxley (who, as you doubtless know, invented the term "Agnosticism") corrected this, saying that it stands not for a creed but for a method—the method, namely, of the rigorous application of reason in all

[1] The writer of this paper wishes it to be stated that, as he explained to the audience at the time of delivery, his engrossment in the laborious task of the Life of Principal Rainy made it extremely difficult for him to find any time to prepare a lecture, and that it is with reluctance, and only after repeated requests, that he has agreed to its publication in this volume. [Ed.]

intellectual questions, going with it as far as it will go, but not pretending that conclusions are sure which are not demonstrated. This is the second phase. The third or practical phase is illustrated —worthily illustrated, for of course there are many who illustrate it unworthily—in such a book as Lecky's *Map of Life*, which plans out and discusses human interests without any reference to things beyond. To put it more briefly. As a dogma, Agnosticism says that we cannot know God: the very nature of the Absolute makes it impossible. As a rule of reason, it says that we do not; there is not demonstrated evidence. And as a practical view of life, it seems to say we need not, which with many people very easily comes to mean that we don't care much whether we do or not. I take it that your presence at a meeting of a society such as the St Ninian's is an indication that you are not among those who don't care; so I shall say no more of this, though I am quite sure that, with a great many people, what makes them Agnostics or call themselves so is not want of knowledge but sheer want of interest.

I

Of Agnosticism as a dogma that God—one may use the familiar term "without prejudice," as the lawyers say—is and must be "the Unknowable," I shall say little for two reasons. One is that I am

sure the philosophical aspect of the subject was brilliantly dealt with by the last lecturer, whom I had not the pleasure of hearing, but whose ardent idealism is a champagne which must have exhilarated the faith alike of the drugged dogmatist among you and the attenuated Agnostic. The other reason is that as positive doctrine Agnosticism has rather died out. Men say now that they do not know about God; but to lay it down as an article of creed that God cannot be known is itself to contradict Agnosticism. I shall refer only briefly to the Spencerian doctrine that the Absolute Being must be the Unknowable, for I do not think it has retained much hold in philosophy.

The fact is that it was a desperate attempt to say two opposites at once. The philosophical basis of the doctrine is the relativity of knowledge—that "to think is to condition." Is it possible to hold both that all knowledge is relative and at the same time that we have and must have the conception of the Infinite and Absolute? We know only in relation, and yet know that there is something which is not relative. This is trying to eat your cake and have it—only in this case it is not a cake but only a philosopher's stone. And this criticism is not answered by saying that the Infinite and Absolute is only a negative of the finite and relative. Spencer was continually protesting that the

Absolute was no mere negative. It exists. Indeed, he predicated many things about it. It is Power, something like our wills; it is omnipresent and eternal; it is a Cause, and creates and sustains all things. All this is hardly Agnosticism. Mr Fiske has indeed worked it out into a kind of theism. The fact is that if God be the utterly unknowable, then we should be unconscious even of His (or its) existence; and, on the other hand, if our knowledge be entirely limited by relativity, we should not be conscious of that limit. The Absolute is unknowable, yet we know it is unknowable: to think is to condition, yet we think of the unconditioned—this is that "aye and no" which Shakspere says is "bad theology."

But, even if in form it were not self-contradictory, the doctrine is, at bottom, a false view or what the Absolute or God is. Is it the true view of the Supreme and Absolute Being to say it is that which is out of all relativities of existence? Mere abstract being is the most elementary and the poorest of all categories. Even a stone has extension in addition to being. Is not the true view of the Supreme Being that it (or He) is not that which is outwith all relations but that which includes and exhausts and transcends them? Thus we can never know God fully. There will always be an Agnosticism—even within the religion of the Christian revelation. We can-

not by searching find out God. As I have said, God exhausts and transcends all our categories. But, as I have also said, God includes them. He is not unrelated to existences as we know it. He is that in which all things live and move and have their being. Spencer's invitation to us to view his abstract category or Absolute Being, denuded of all reality of existence as we know it, with "awe" and "wonder," has probably not produced response in a single human soul. The God of the Pantheist—rich in all the infinitude of existent reality—is a comprehensible object of adoration; but the God of the Agnostic—de-anthropomorphised, de-mundanised, denuded of all qualities—is the poorest thing that was ever offered to the religious instinct of man, in the way of a God.

If I do not dwell longer on Agnosticism as a positive article of creed, it will be understood that this is only from the need for brevity: it does not mean any want of respect to the memory of so comprehensive and independent a thinker as Herbert Spencer. But, in our day, it is not the positive doctrine that God must be the unknowable that most concerns us, and I pass to the second phase which I have named.

II

Huxley (who, as I have said, was the inventor of the term Agnosticism) says it is not a dogmatic

assertion of ignorance about certain matters but a method of attaining or testing knowledge. This method he describes as follows: "positively—in matters of the intellect, follow your reason as far as it will take you, without regard to any other consideration: negatively—do not pretend that conclusions are certain which are not demonstrated or demonstrable." In a word, the Agnostic rule of reason is the strict limitation of belief to what is demonstrated by rational evidence, and from this follows the duty of dismissing all prejudices—either affirmations or denials—which interfere with this intellectual rule. As a general proposition this would carry assent from every liberal mind. Huxley's application of it is the essential thing. For him it meant an attitude of reasoned ignorance about everything beyond the sphere of sense-perception, and therefore the rejection of any belief in what is more than empirical, any belief in that which is beyond phenomena. This is obviously a much purer and more justifiable agnosticism than the positive doctrine concerning God as the unknowable which Spencer gave us. It is indeed a frequently salutary admonition to dogmatism and traditionalism in theology or in any other subject. But there are one or two remarks which may be made upon it in relation both to science and to religion.

The man of science who professes to apply it

as Huxley did, maintaining a reasoned ignorance about everything beyond phenomena, yet departs from it every day in his scientific investigation. What is the very postulate of science? Is it not that nature will be found to be a *cosmos?* that there is law and order in the world? that things are not capricious and insane but rational? Science exists only on that footing. But is that a matter within sense-perception? We have no empirical knowledge of a universal world-order. The fact that such-and-such an event has been seen to follow such-and-such another, which is all sense-perception gives us or can give us, is not demonstrated proof, such as the Agnostic, such as reason demands, that the universe is rationally trustworthy. Yet this rational trustworthiness of the universe is the very beginning and basis of science. It is not merely a working-hypothesis which science may employ : it is that without which science could not be. The Agnostic method then presupposes what may most truly be called an act not of rational demonstration, but an act of faith. In religion the Apostle says the just live by faith; but in science a man must live by faith whether he be just or not just, and even if he be an Agnostic. Let this be clear. We are told by an eminent man of science to dismiss all that is not demonstrated or demonstrable by reason in empirical experience; but the very basis of science itself

is not so demonstrated or demonstrable. If, then, science must, as an act of faith, assume the rational trustworthiness of the universe, why should we stop here? Why not, if need be, go on to the moral and spiritual trustworthiness of the universe, which is what religion does when it asks us to believe in God?

So, then, I turn to consider the relation of this Agnostic rule of reason to religion. Here, the great thing to be said is that the Agnostic point of view does at once an immense service to religious (by which I may here be allowed to mean Christian) faith by putting out of court all *a priori* objections. I do not think it can be denied that the strongest difficulties that most people have about certain things in Christianity are antecedent objections—not so much that the evidence, fairly looked at, is inadequate, as that the idea of the thing is incredible. Take, for example, the Divinity of Jesus Christ. The great difficulty about believing that is not the insufficiency of the historical evidence. The historical evidence, when one really studies the personality and influence and words and consciousness of Jesus is such as to make it extraordinarily difficult—really impossible—to reckon Him merely as a man among men. The real difficulty is the utter incredibility of the idea of an incarnation of the Infinite God, Who transcends all in the universe, appearing in the

guise of a Galilean peasant. That is the real difficulty. But the Agnostic rule of reason commands you to dismiss it. The question is not one of *a priori* likelihood or even credibility: it is one of evidence. But how few Agnostics live up to their rule in this matter! I take as an illustration the man of science whom we must all name with reverence—Charles Darwin. Romanes said Darwin was the most pure in his Agnosticism of all scientific men—pure, that is to say, in having no pre-judging dogmas, but simply searching for and recording the facts. Yet if you read in Darwin's life how he drifted away from Christian faith, you find that what influenced him was not an impartial study of the fact of Jesus Christ and the finding of that inadequate, but a feeling of the *a priori* incredibility of the Supreme Being manifesting Himself in such wise and to such a small part of His creation. Surely Darwin here failed in the Agnostic attitude as regards Christianity, the attitude maintained by none more strictly than himself in science. It is unlikely, it is *a priori* incredible if you like, that Almighty God should be incarnate in this Galilean peasant. But is it not as unlikely, is it not *a priori* as incredible, that humanity with all its capacities of mind and heart, and all its intellectual and moral achievement, should be the product of an unconscious cell or a brute anthropoid ape? Yet no thought about

either the credibility or the incredibility of it deterred this great man of science from the most impartial, the most painstaking, the most devout (for truly one may call Darwin's work devout) study of the facts. It is the same unprejudiced, impartial, earnest study of the fact of Jesus Christ which more than anything else Christianity asks for, and men influenced by the Agnostic method should be the first to give it. On Agnostic principles there should be an end to such objections to things in Christian belief as Hume's argument against miracles: the question is one of evidence. I think candid and intelligent men are more and more coming to see that. Certainly Huxley—a candid and an intelligent man if ever there was one—saw it and said it. He had not, he declared, "the slightest objection to offer *a priori*" to the creeds. "It would be a great mistake," he added, "to think that the Agnostic rejects theology because of its puzzles and wonders: he rejects it simply because in his judgment there would be no evidence sufficient to warrant the theological propositions, even if they related to the commonest and most obvious every-day propositions." These are Huxley's words, and, whatever may be thought of them as a just statement of the facts regarding Christian evidence, they certainly mean this—that *a priori* objections to the difficulty or impossibility of Christian belief are to be dismissed and the

facts faced without prejudice or favour. This is the immense contribution of the Agnostic rule to Christian faith. "Come and see" is not more the invitation of the Christian gospel than it is the rule of the scientific reason.

When will scientific men deal frankly and fully with the fact of Jesus Christ as the very rule of scientific reason calls them to do? I take a single illustration, for I have not time to dwell on this. Take ethical science. What as a simple matter of pure historical fact has been the greatest force influencing human conduct for good? What more than anything else has reformed that which is the subject of ethical science—namely, character? I say without fear of contradiction that it has been, not merely the recorded teaching, but the personal spiritual influence of Jesus Christ in millions of lives—or, if that form of it is questioned, what these millions regarded as His personal spiritual influence. What book on the science of ethics mentions it? I submit there is something unscientific here—as unscientific as it would be to discuss the forces of natural phenomena and not mention electricity. Ethical teachers will discuss Hedonism, Utilitarianism, and so on without end: but I repeat, as a simple matter of fact, *the* potent ethical fact and factor has been a certain alleged personal spiritual authority and influence, and to ignore it is to be unscientific in relation to

facts more than to be irreligious in relation to faith.

Now I cannot possibly here go on to argue what a frank and unprejudiced facing of the fact of Christ leads to as regards the knowledge of God. Will you allow me to state, in little more than a few sentences, the two certainties, as they seem to me, to which it brings us?

One is the historical reality of the picture of Jesus Christ. I mean that I think that no man can really let the Christ of the New Testament make frank and fair appeal on the mind and heart and conscience without realising that this is no fancy portrait. I hold no rigid views about the infallible accuracy of every detail of the narrative. The fringes of the picture may be frayed by criticism without any great harm being done. But the substantial truth of the person, Jesus Christ, impresses itself irresistibly. Here is a real figure with whom every sincere mind and life must really reckon. You can neither deny Him nor honestly get away from Him. A fair and frank facing of the fact of Jesus Christ makes Him a great reality for life and conscience with which you must come to terms both intellectually by asking who He is, and also morally by settling what you are going to be. On a hundred antecedent grounds it is easy to evade this. But if a man frankly and earnestly and unprejudicedly

faces the Christ of the New Testament, I think this historical and spiritual reality of Jesus is irresistible.

The second thing is that when a man goes on with continued frankness and earnestness and unprejudicedness to give an intellectual and moral answer to this, he finds himself taking a relation to Jesus Christ which is quite indistinguishable from the attitude he would take to a revelation of the unseen and unknown God. He finds Christ becoming far more than his teacher. He finds Christ identical with the ultimate word of faith and morals. Take a single concrete example. One of the ultimate ethical thoughts about God—if there be a God who watches our lives—is that He is our Judge, and that all our lives are responsible to Him and stand and fall according to His view of them. We find that our lives do stand or fall, and that what judges them is Christ's presence over against them. We find His law as ultimate as right itself. We find, in a word, that we cannot distinguish, in any spiritual sense, between this real figure and the Unseen God. He has a spiritual value for us of God. I am not just now arguing for the Divinity of Christ. I am simply stating what an unprejudiced facing of the fact of Jesus Christ seems to me inevitably to bring in its train.

Start, then, I say from the Agnostic method.

It is the Christian method. Lay aside *a priori* discussions about the antecedent incredibility of revelation or miracle or anything else. Do to the fact of Christ as you would to the facts of nature. You will (so at least I feel) find it real, not a figment of the first or second century. You will find it a little too real for your entire moral comfort. You will find, unless you are going to lay aside the spirit of honest inquiry, that you must take up an attitude to it in mind and in conscience and in life. And you will find (so, again, at least I feel) that the attitude you must take is not other than you would have to take to a very word from the unseen and unknown God. I do not on some ecclesiastical principle of authority seek to impose this on you. On the principle of the scientific rule of reason, I ask you to investigate it.

This is, I think, the Christian way of dealing with Agnosticism about God. It is not by a mere philosophy—idealistic or any other. It is not a different philosophy the Agnostic (I do not now speak of Spencerianism) needs: it is data. G. H. Lewes dismissed religion from the region of verifiable knowledge because, he says, "it confesses its inability to furnish knowledge with any available data." The Christian religion furnishes knowledge with the biggest fact in all history and the fact of Jesus Christ. Here is not merely a new philosophy to write a review about. Here is a

fact, a figure, a force to be faced intellectually and morally. You say you cannot find or know God. Find and face and know and obey Jesus Christ. There is something at least answerable, doable. Your Agnosticism does not apply here. No doctrine of the unknowable need hinder you here. And your mental and moral answer to the real fact of Jesus Christ is, I have tried to say, an answer to the question of the soul concerning the unseen and unknown God. It is nothing that I say this to you. My saying it carries no weight to your minds. I do not desire that it should. The greatest teacher of religion the world has ever seen says it. It is Jesus Christ who says of Himself, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh to the Father but by Me," and "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness." Do not dismiss these as mere texts. They are the distinct directions of, I repeat, the greatest teacher of religion the world has ever seen. They are the counsel of Jesus to the Agnostic.

III

I do not apologise for speaking in this strain, though it may seem to you that some of these observations would be—to use Charles Lamb's translation of *propiora sermoni*—"properer to a sermon." I do not apologise, for I claim the same right to ask you to investigate the fact of

Jesus Christ as any lecturer on history or science might ask you to investigate an historical period or a scientific fact. But I shall not say more than a word or two on the third or practical phase of Agnosticism which I named at the outset. Our great danger is an Agnostic scheme of life—a scheme of life not necessarily bad or unworthy, but without any account taken in it of God, especially as He is revealed in Jesus Christ. Now I am not going to preach. I shall say just two things—one about myself and the other about people in general. For myself, I find I can live a worthy and an honest life just in so far as I do make this fact of Jesus Christ a real and a determining element in it. I am not judging others; but I find that myself. A life that ignored Him would be for me—I don't say necessarily an immoral life—but a life with poorer principles and lower ideals than even at present I possess. The other remark I make about a scheme of life that never really faces up to these things, and particularly to that one great Fact, is that it is not the scheme of life in which the greatest and best service of the world has been done. When you choose your creed, you choose your company. Perhaps you say to me you don't want to be in the company of the orthodox humbugs who are to be found in numbers in the professing Christian Church. I don't ask you to be. But I ask you which is the nobler company

—those whose lives studiously shut out all reference to the authority and meaning for faith and character of Jesus Christ or those who make Him their Master and Teacher and Saviour? Putting aside exceptional instances on either side, which is the nobler company? After all it is faith in God, and not unbelief; it is following Jesus Christ and not ignoring Him, that inspires and develops character. The sham thing is nauseous —*corruptio optimi pessima*—but the real thing is noble. Join at least this Church—the company of those who find life has many unsolved mysteries (and ever find its mystery deepen as it goes on) but find also that the fact of Jesus Christ really and earnestly and unprejudicedly worked out in mind and conscience, means what is quite indistinguishable from a word of God, and means what is quite clearly the truest kind of life.

I am deeply conscious of the utter inadequacy of these observations—put together, as they have had to be, under circumstances of much pressure —but I cannot now add to them. I venture to close by simply stating my own personal experience in regard to religious knowledge, which is that, as life goes on, the sense of Agnostic ignorance and of Christian certitude *both* increase. What I mean is this. There are many things about which one used to be (if you will pardon the colloquialism) "cock-sure," which now seem immeasurable and unsearchable, and of which

the knowledge is "too high" so that we "cannot attain unto it." I think a man must become less of a dogmatist as he grows older. Our systems are, as the poet justly calls them, "our *little* systems," and truth, even what we call "simple truth," is so vast. This need not make us sceptical, but it should make us humble. It should make all of us that—the theologian, who should remember, as I have said, that there is an Agnosticism along with even revealed religion, and also the scientist, who should remember that if we speak of "humble faith" we should have humble unfaith too. Let us all have the temper which does not over-dogmatise. But I find it quite consistent with this to hold with increasing certainty some things or rather one thing. This one thing is that, historically and spiritually, there is in the fact of Jesus Christ that which, in the most real and absolute sense, is a light direct from God and recognisable as such by the honest mind. And I find it consistent with all reason not to refuse to look at but to follow steadily and resolutely after that light, even though—indeed all the more because—it shines in the midst of a darkness which it does not wholly dispel.

> "God stooping, shows sufficient of His light
> For us in the dark to rise by."

THE TRUE RATIONALISM

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THE TRUE RATIONALISM

Τὸ ἔργον ἀνθρώπου ψυχῆς ἐνέργεια κατὰ λόγον.
—Aristotle, *Eth. Nic.* i. 6.

Foreword

This Lecture was somewhat hurriedly put together after a long illness—an extenuating circumstance which may be charitably thought to account for some of its defects and omissions.

Throughout its composition, I have had before my eyes and mind the figures of Aristotle, founder of the Peripatetic school of philosophy, and his great Christian commentator, St Thomas Aquinas. It has long been my ambition to reproduce, however inadequately, some of the features of these two illustrious Rationalists, in the conviction that their account of, and plea for, the headship of human Reason, were never more sorely needed than in an age when the many derivatives of the word *Ratio* (Reason) are in constant and vigorous circulation, while the faculty itself is left unregarded, unanalysed and undisciplined, to the detriment, if not the ruin, of philosophy and religion alike.

Introduction

To lull all fears to rest and as part requital of the great favour you have done me, I think I can promise that I shall not overpass the philosophical boundaries of my title, nor raid the realm of Theology, nor trouble you with hard sayings touching Divine Revelation or the Supernatural. Thus I hope to confine myself to the elementary psychology which is the basis of Rationalism.

Some apology may be due for a title which seems to imply that there are two distinct forms of Rationalism, one true, the other false. Rationalism, like Christianity, has no plural. False Rationalism is a contradiction in terms, implying that a man may follow the guidance of the light of reason, follow it irrationally, and be landed in unreason. There are true and false Rationalists, as there are true and false Christians: that is to say, there are people who take a good name in vain; nevertheless the thing underlying the name is one, and not two. When, then, in the course of my lecture, I am found to prefix the epithet "true" or "false" to Rationalism, you will understand that in the first case, I plead guilty to an innocent tautology, and in the second, I am indulging in a *façon de parler* which, though not logical, is deservedly popular.

On this difficult subject I shall do my best to be clear. I am an old schoolmaster, not a Gifford lecturer, and I fail to see why it is incumbent on me, when addressing an educated audience, to doff the week-day style which goes down with my collier-friends, and to don the Sunday clothes of a stiff and stilted phraseology. I may have two suits of clothes, but I have only one kind of style ; for men are the same everywhere and I am everywhere the same with men.

The Rationalism I shall try to expound has had the start of the Rationalism, say, of the Rationalist Press Association, by about 2200 years, and has drawn to it the greatest intellects of the world from Aristotle through St Thomas Aquinas down to the little group of Oxford scholars who are now engaged on a new edition of the *Opera Omnia* of the founder of the Peripatetic school. I am old-fashioned enough to believe that this long duration through the centuries and this wide-spread influence exercised over the choicest and weightiest of medieval minds, establish some sort of presumption that the old system is at least as worthy of investigation as the new. Not even to us of the twentieth century has antiquity lost all its charms. The only quarrel I have with the University of Glasgow—a quarrel much accentuated in the case of the University of Edinburgh—is, that it is not older than the Papal Charter dated 7th January

1450. Perhaps you would all be better pleased if your *alma mater* had as many grey hairs on her head—or should I say was as bald-headed?—as Paris or Bologna or Oxford, or even St Andrews. The younger the baby, the more beautiful it is. So say some mothers. The older the institution, the more venerable it is. So say I. But we may both be wrong—the mothers and I. Anyhow, what I call the True Rationalism of the Aristotelian school once sat in the chairs of Glasgow University in pre-Reformation and post-Reformation days, figures largely in the works of Robert Baillie, the very capable and very Calvinistic Principal of the seventeenth century, and, for aught I know, is still enthroned within these walls. In such company I am not ashamed to own myself a Rationalist of the ancient type.

I. Rationalism or Foolishness?

Before we come to a scientific definition of Rationalism, let me call attention to this point—if we are not Rationalists, we are fools. But there is no one here deserving of this reproach. Therefore all of us here are Rationalists. That is a syllogism beloved of the Peripatetics; it is also a comfort to this assembly. Between Rationalism and Foolishness there is no *tertium quid*. In

human nature *qua*[1] human nature, the only light is reason. Where that is not given at all, even in germ, you have not men before you, but lower animals. When the use of that faculty which makes a man a man, is impeded by physiological or pathological conditions, we are imbeciles. If we extinguish that light ourselves by a course of physical or psychical excess, we are self-made lunatics, *pro rata*, *i.e.* in proportion to the mental area which we empty of light or invest with darkness. Rationalists or Irrationalists we must all be in every moment of conscious or deliberate action. If any course of speculative thought is seen to be irrational, we are obliged, in deference to the law of reason, not to enter that path, or to quit it if entered. If we do not, we are, I shudder to say it, intellectual fools, *pro rata*. Similarly, if in the moral sphere, a course of action is known by the light of reason to be unreasonable, we are constrained to leave that action undone, and if we persist in doing it, we are moral fools—again *pro rata*.

To come to particulars. If Christianity is shown by reason to be irrational or anti-rational, it is your duty and mine to abandon it to-morrow or perhaps to-night. Again, if ultra-Socialism commends itself to calm and dispassionate

[1] *Qua*, a favourite relative particle with the schoolmen. It is the Aristotelian ἤ, and is getting into English books, and even into leaders in *The Glasgow Herald*.

reason as the sole and sufficient remedy for all social ills, we must, as consistent Rationalists, evacuate our present position, go over in a body to the Glasgow Socialists, and embrace the Manifesto which was painted with the flaming brush of Confiscation as recently as November last. The one great human force to keep us in the old paths of the Faith is Rationalism. The one impelling power to necessitate our migration to opposite fields of thought and action is Rationalism. If man is a rational animal, we cannot get out of Rationalism any more than we can get out of our skin.

I take it, then, we are all Rationalists, and our determination to remain so is strengthened by the consideration that the type of the non-Rationalist is the born idiot, and the type of the anti-Rationalist is—Mr Robert Blatchford.

II. Praise of Rationalism

"*Bonum rationis est hominis bonum*" [1]
"*Homo maxime est mens hominis*" [2]

A panegyric is not always rational in its substance, and its length sometimes makes it

[1] "The good of reason is the good of man."—St Augustine, *De Trin.* VI. 8.

[2] "Man is pre-eminently the mind of man."—St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa*, 1-2, q. 29. art. 4.

highly irrational. Hence I must not linger long on this section. Besides, as we are all Rationalists, because all non-fools, too much praise of Rationalism might be considered flattery of us Rationalists, and thus stir up the vanity latent, if not blatant, in every human breast. Hence, to escape the danger of anything like complicity in guilt, I shall let much of the praising be done by others. "*Summum animæ est ipsa ratio*"[1]—"It is reason which is the summation of the soul," says St Thomas, the interpreter *par excellence* of Aristotle, and the faithful disciple of the Greek master whom he always calls "*the* Philosopher." And again, "*Causa et radix humani boni est ratio*"[2]—"The cause and root of man's good is Reason." And more strongly still: "*Nihil est majus mente rationali nisi Deus*"[3]—"There is nothing greater than the thinking mind, except God."[4]

Rationalism is often said to be a formidable foe of Religion. It was once thought to be its best friend. There is some mistake here, that prompts me to refer you to a foregoing remark about Rationalism true and false. Let Rationalism grow

[1] *Ibid.* 2-2, q. 53, art. 3.
[2] *Ibid.* 1-2, q. 66, art. 1.
[3] *Ibid.* Supplem. q. 16, art. 6.
[4] St Augustine had written the same sentence with "human" instead of "thinking" mind. St Thomas, who was a great believer in angelic spirits and their resplendent intelligences, remembers that in the mental scale they come between man and God, and so adroitly changes the word "human" to "thinking."

from more to more in Religion, and Religion will be all the better for it. If reason got a fair chance, would it, think you, lead us into the welter of doubt and strife and recrimination in which this dear land is plunged, and plunged so long that it is matter of conjecture whether she will ever emerge with breath enough in her body to pronounce the name of God? An enemy hath done this thing and no friend. The best human friend of Divine Truth is the thing that makes man most like to the mind of God, and that is reason. If Rationalism, through such agencies as the Rationalist Press Association, proclaims itself the enemy of Christianity, make sure, with the aid of your reason, which kind of Rationalism is speaking, the false or the true. If "Modernism" poses as the friend of Religion, let reason pause and see whether such friendly professions come well from a system which belittles and belies reason, and is therefore the death of Rationalism, rather than the life of Religion. "We *could* not believe," says St Augustine, "if we had not rational souls."[1] With rational souls men can disbelieve, but is it the rational element in the soul that is in arms against Faith, or has their reason capitulated to such foes of reason as ignorance, passion, or pride? In the religious sphere, which constitutes, as Matthew Arnold says, "the three-fourths of life,"

[1] *Epist.*, 120, n 3.

there is room for the exercise of reason, and yet this department is just the one where reason is exercised least. This looks badly for truth, considering that, in the words of Bishop Butler, "Reason is the only faculty we have wherewith to judge concerning anything, even religion itself."[1] In the search for the true religion, reason is wanted, even more than in the search for anything else. "It is a disgrace," cries St Augustine, "to believe any man without good reason. Why expect and importune me to do it?"[2] and St Thomas adds, "a rational man should not believe unless he sees that the proposition believed were worthy of his belief, by reason of the evidence of accompanying signs, or for some good reason."[3]

Dispraise of a great thing may be as culpable as praise of what is ignoble. Rationalism is the highest of all the "isms." To underrate it is to deride, and to denounce it is to forswear the noblest attribute of human nature. Outside of it no one can find human salvation. Whatever views philosophers have held of the genesis of man, whatever theories about his essence have been broached, established, attacked, or exploded, whether we be illimitable nothings or the sum of all things, the sport of chance or the objects of

[1] *Analogy*, etc. [2] *De Utilitate Credendi*, xiv. 31.
[3] *Summa*, 2-2, q. 1, art. 4.

design, the scions of brutes or the sons of God, the expansion of a bodiless idea or the resultant force of dead matter, the cunning workmanship of demiurges or the clumsy experiment of one of Nature's journeymen; whencesoever we are and whithersoever tending, all are agreed that there is in us such a thing as thought, and to this thinking power in the last resort, the truth or falsehood of every judgment that sweeps the area of consciousness must be referred, and by this power the final word of acceptance or condemnation on every imaginable creed, system or hypothesis must be pronounced.

III. Definition of Rationalism

It is no grave fault of mine, I submit, to have deferred the definition of Rationalism so long; it is rather a covert compliment to you, that you know the thing before I define it.

A very conspicuous feature of the old Rationalists is the love of definition. They not only could not get on without it; they simply revelled in it. Were it only to humour them, let us define Rationalism to be that system of philosophy which upholds the headship of human reason.

Exception may well be taken to this form of words as a near approach to tautology. It comes to this, that human reason upholds the headship

of human reason. It is to be hoped it does. What else is head within man except his head? A man sticks up for himself, why not reason for itself, especially as there is nothing else worth sticking up for? The man indeed may be in the wrong in his self-defence, whereas reason cannot err in its declaration that it cannot knock under to something inferior, that it cannot abdicate or substitute in its place a *locum tenens*. If any such competitor or rival or representative is to be found, reason asks, where is it? and there is no answer. There is only one runner in the race, and it has a walk-over. Cast about for the main thing in the material universe, and your mind will not only light upon, but get fixed on, man, and your scrutiny of man can lead to no other conclusion than that the biggest thing amidst all his littlenesses is his power of thought. "Narrow the world, roomy the brain of man," says Schiller. With equal truth, perhaps, we could reverse the epithets and speak of the roomy world and the narrow brain, but it is not a question of space here, but of relative positions in the scale of being.[1] The thinking power lodged in the convolutions of the little organ called the brain of man, is confessedly of a higher order than the vast stretch of ether "which bathes the shores of the farthest

[1] This "scale" is a great favourite with Pope in his "Essay on Man."

star," and comes under the designation of the lower creation. Reason, then, knows itself to be head, and this fact will enable us to leave out all reference to reason as upholding herself, and define Rationalism more simply as the headship of reason.

"Supremacy" would not do as well. It means too much. We may stand head and shoulders above all that is of the earth earthy, but we are certainly not supreme over it, as we find to our cost, when we try to tackle it and bring it under control. In this tussle, if anything is supreme, it is not our minds but certain "laws of Nature" which are not only not of our making, but are often directly opposed to our will. If Sir Gilbert Scott, the architect of this University, saw a stone at the bottom of the ravine, and judged it worthy to mount to the top of the tower on Gilmorehill, you know how little he could do with his mind and will, if, furnished with these weapons alone, he entered into conflict with the phenomena of gravitation, and commanded the stone to rise. The stone would not move, and the bystander might laugh. A happy compromise between Nature and Sir Gilbert would follow, and the block and pulley would lift the stone into mid-air. All the while this mechanical device would be as much under the "law of gravity" as the weight moved. We may coax Nature and play into her

hands, but it is folly to talk of supremacy over forces which we are powerless to check or change in any substantial way. "Supremacy," then, has no place in our definition. We are really and truly heads over some things, but what are we supreme over? I, for one, don't know.

IV. Inerrancy of the Senses

My panegyric of reason was pretty strong. As I went on, somebody may have regarded me as a kind of Rugby footballer who was going a little too fast and furious, and ought to be stopped. I am afraid I must go on, and take my chance of a tripping. I am going to call Reason inerrant or infallible. The shock may possibly be intensified when I add that the senses of man, inferior though they necessarily are to the dominant reason, are themselves entitled to be called inerrant.

Applying a little of the old Rationalism to *Sensism*, I venture to assert with the Aristotelian scholastics that our senses are *per se* infallible guides in their limited domain. Never wrong themselves, they do seem to mislead us, especially when the organs of sense are ill-equipped, to begin with, or have suffered some lesion, or are forced to work under abnormal conditions. Hampered or vitiated though they be, they do the only thing

they can do—their mechanical best—and if error of judgment follows, it cannot be imputed to the non-judging sense, but to some other faculty in us. When a sense is from any cause, congenital or other, defective in structure or function, it fails, of course, but it cannot turn false witness. Aristotle applied to this breakdown of a sense a Greek phrase which is nearly always mistranslated by the English "accidentally" or "casually."[1] There is no such thing as chance. No cataract on the eye comes "casually." Another thing which the Peripatetics always did with mishaps among the senses, was to ignore them and turn back to the general rule of their normal operation —and we cannot blame them. They were not oculists, or aurists, or specialists, but only philosophers.

The proper object, say of the sense of vision, is that condition of the thing seen which we call its colour, and nothing else, not hardness nor softness, nor nearness nor distance. The normal eye—and we always assume unless positive proof to the contrary is forthcoming, that all our eyes are normal—can distinguish between red and green in coloured objects. Ten thousand pairs of eyes set in the skulls of ten thousand rational men, see a train passing a signal at express speed and

[1] This famous term is *κατὰ συμβεβηκός*; medieval Latin, *per accidens*. It generally means out of the normal course of nature, and approximates to *παρὰ φύσιν*.

hurrying to destruction. This great body of spectators gives evidence, we will suppose, as to the colour of the signal lamps. All are positive it was a red light. We are making no inquiry into the mental processes going on in the minds of the eye-witnesses, but are only concerned with their eyes. Are we absolutely convinced, after hearing the signalman and the ten thousand, that the red colour was seen by this vast crowd? I think we are. We receive their united assertion with confidence. They could not be mistaken. The evidence is overwhelming. We are sure of the infallibility of the host of witnesses, but, be it observed, not more sure of it than they are of the infallibility of their sense of sight which recorded the sensation which they call the sensation of redness. The reactive sense has had an impression made on it. It cannot have more, and it cannot have less. If it had less, it could not be a sense in action ; if it had more, the added element would be foreign matter to the simple sense. It records because it cannot help recording, and it does no more than record because it has not got it in it to do more. The eye must act under the stimulus of light, and act as necessarily and as "rightly" as vibrations in the ether; equally for the ether and the optic nerve, there is no room to go wrong in. This is at once Rationalism and common-sense. The objection that some out of

the ten thousand are suffering from colour-blindness would be dismissed by the Aristotelians with the remark that these few had better see the oculist, as men whose eyes were "ill-disposed" or filled by some redundant "humour." Not a very scientific way of putting it, yet not against common-sense. These sufferers, not having fulfilled the conditions of the test, are politely informed that their evidence about their own visual experiences is not questioned. In its morbid condition their retina acted with the perfect accuracy of an imperfect organ, as a "game" leg kicks with all the little force it can command. The sensation of green in the case in point was, in view of the damaged apparatus, rightly recorded, and no other record could be made. Nevertheless, the colour-blind are asked to retire from the public court, with condolence on their weakness, but without a stain on their visual honour. This done, the main thesis remains in possession—the eye "in being," which confines itself, as it must, to the perception of a lighted or coloured surface, is infallible in its record of its own peculiar sensation.

The conclusion may be applied with profit to the other senses. The ear is infallible, though the deaf man hears no thunderclap; the taste is infallible though the furred tongue of the patient reports that sweet is bitter and bitter sweet. Everybody calls the holly-leaf prickly though the

thick-skinned hand does not feel it. In all cases of sense-impression, the sense-impressed are infallibly sure—the hearing man of the sound, the eating man of the taste, and the wounded man of the puncture.

It may be doubted *a priori* whether the master-factor in man is in worse case than the lower recipients of sense-impressions. It is a great thing not to be able to go wrong. The senses, as shown, cannot err in their respective provinces. Can it be inferred that the reason is similarly endowed? The question will be best answered after something has been said of the origin of ideas generated in the mind from material objects, through the senses.

V. Materialistic Basis of Rationalistic Idealogy

The immediate object of sense perception having been discussed, the question arises: What is the immediate object of the intellect of man? You will notice that I carefully refrain from slighting your intelligence by any reference to the theory that sense and intellect are one. Dub me a materialist, when you hear the answer. The immediate object of the intellectual faculty is the essential *nature* of material objects brought under its notice by the action of the senses. If the play

of the senses does not fall on a material object, or if, for any reason, that play becomes inoperative, not only does no mental process follow, but all such processes are impossible. Next to our dependence on God comes our dependence on matter. Over-emphasis on the dependence of our original ideas on God leads to a false mysticism: over-emphasis on the dependence of thought on matter leads to a false idealogy, which inevitably issues in a blend of blank materialism and craven agnosticism. The agnostic is constantly harking back to the empirical truth that the highest intellectual ideas have their source in the low stratum of material objects. Then false analogy comes in, tumbling on the top of phrases—the stream cannot rise higher than its source (it can by the pump); the ill-bred boy must grow into the vulgar man (not always); base blood will out (unless it be refined); you can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear, (dermatologists can do something very like it). Hence it is argued that intellectual ideas must pay the penalty of their lowly origin, and can never look up with steady gaze at the supra-materialistic conceptions of the alleged science of Natural Theology. Yet somehow, in spite of the warning words of the wise, and in the midst of all these sagacious head-shakes, we do manage to do the trick. As a matter of stubborn fact, and apart from all flimsy theory, we do

get on, weighted though we are with ideas of materialistic origin. We do contrive to look through Nature up to Nature's God. Lowly though they are in the beginning, our ideas are fairly detachable from the matter which gave them birth, and can and do rise, as in the case of Lord Kelvin of Belfast and Glasgow—*O clarum et venerabile nomen!*—to a conspicuous place on a highly exalted spiritual plane. Higher and higher is the ascent, but we do not quail, not even when we come to the First Cause of all. "*Ecce Deus, vincens scientiam nostram.*[1]" Lo! it is God, and God known, and God still overtopping our knowledge. That God is known to the great Biblical poet is shown by the magnificent passage on the material creation, that follows this striking text.

Outside this world of sense there are realities, and they are reached through the world of sense, and when so reached they are found with earthly vapours about them, and wearing the poor texture in which our material senses could not but clothe them, and of which our loftiest aspirations after truth cannot wholly divest them. They are truly known, though far from adequately, and with many limitations. They are apprehended by reason mediately, through the bodily organs, and somewhat distortedly, like things seen in the dusk, but not mockingly and not fallaciously. They

[1] Job xxxvi. 26, in the Vulgate.

are ours, but not by insight or intuition. Freed from the bonds of matter themselves, they lend no support to the theory of our emancipation from what Plato called a thraldom, and Aristotle a natural necessity. We have to wait on the senses before we become their masters. We must take the consequences of the essentially materialistic origin of ideas, and confess that the strongest intellect that ever took wing aloft, does not enter into possession of the full meaning of any one supra-sensible truth. "*Cognitio earum* (*veritatum*) *non est humana possessio*,"—"Clear knowledge of these truths is not in the possession of man."[1] Thus speaks the true materialism of the old Rationalism; and it was in this sense that I invited you to call me a materialist. Just as I said that we must be Rationalists or fools, I may add now that we must either be materialists in our psychology, or demi-gods or some such preposterous thing. No matter how the spiritual faculty within may seize on, transform and idealise sensations previously derived from material substances, there *can* be no grist for the intellectual mill except that which is borne through the canals of the senses. Thus the disembodied spirit of the infant whose first breath is its last is doomed, unless there be wondrous modes of tuition in the spirit-world, to go through its

[1] St Thomas following Aristotle.

eternity without a single vestige of the thought and ratiocination which mortals can acquire, solely through the use and study of the material creation.[1] Where there is no kind of physical stimulus or molecular motion in the organ of the brain, the scientific fear may well be entertained that the mental correlative of this material change will never appear in the form of an intellectual idea.

Granted there are no innate ideas—and no one has ever gone within measurable distance of proving it—whence are ideas to come save from the senses? Perhaps from spirit acting on spirit; but this is speculation. A melancholy corollary is that some medical students who depart this life in the bloom of their "first year," may remain for ever as destitute of all notions of anatomy as the infant may be of all forms of intellectual life—and who can contemplate without a shudder a medical eternity without an idea of a human skeleton!

The very intangible, because highly spiritual, action of mind on an object of sense may possibly be illustrated thus:—A man and a cat seated together at the fire are looking together at a common object, say a coal-scuttle. The same sense-impressions, we may assume, are made on both, but the man is thinking and the cat—I beg pardon of some students of feline psychology—is

[1] No reference will be expected here to the supernatural state of the baptised infant.

not, and cannot. Abstracting from the *thisness* and *thusness* of the object, the man sees at a glance that it is a vessel for coal. Note the significance of the indefinite article. The moment we say in our mind "*a* vessel" we are putting the scuttle in a class, we are generalising or forming a *generic* idea not of the individual piece of metal, but of its *whatness*. We are intellectually coerced to know *what* it is—a vessel. And this is a small thing, you say, this overlooking of all the individualising notes of the coal-scuttle and this formation of the large concept of *vessel*. Why, every definition in a dictionary does this, and who respects the lexicographer! Seriously this process that comes so easy to you and to me as we gaze at the scuttle, is of such vast import that if you write down this ridiculously simple definition, "A coal-scuttle is a *vessel* for coal," an expert in the old Rationalism will undertake to prove to you that you are possessed of a faculty far transcending sense, a faculty non-material and spiritual, and therefore indivisible and therefore indestructible; in a word, that you have a soul and an immortal one too. Wherever there is a mental leap from the individual to generalisation about the individual, it takes a spiritual soul to perform the feat. Matter moves only in its own plane. It never jumps up out of it, for it knows of no such relation as *up* or *down*, nor of anything outside or above its con-

centrated self. It never refers an object which is seen to a class of objects not seen. You *see* a harmonium; you *think* of reed-instruments and class it with them. You are doing what is impossible to matter or mere sense. No animal has ever been known to make the smallest attempt at the universal idea that lurks in the simplest definition of the commonest object of sense. Every line in the despised dictionary is a proof of the non-material character of the mind. No trained horse or dog or elephant, in spite of the magniloquent puffs of their trainers, has come within shouting distance even of the clumsy definition that has made a certain boy immortal: "A button is what, when it isn't sewed on, makes breeches fall down." In the wide sweep it takes of a large class of wearing apparel, the definition is a noble generalisation and essentially intellectual. The idea underlying the word "thing" or even the slang, "thingamy," is that of Being in general. By its very simplicity it defies analysis, and dwells in so rarefied an atmosphere that no material organ or function has ever moved a step in its direction; yet it is the concept that is never wanting in each and every operation of the human mind.

Take another example of intellectual power not shared by any being below the level of man. From one tiny bit of radium, the student of this mysterious substance, who has some knowledge of its inner

(not innermost) nature, will be able to generalise, and feels himself irresistibly prompted to generalise and to assert with absolute confidence that the phenomena he has been exhibiting will be repeated in every piece of radium, should that mineral be discovered lying in numberless beds, each a hundred feet thick, in the uttermost parts of the world. How does the one piece in his hand—and few men have ever held two—tell him that? It does not tell him. He could not rise an inch above the specimen he holds between finger and thumb, unless he had within him the far-carrying pinions of a spiritual soul. Conscious or subconscious, this power of generalisation is always present to the thinking man, and the general ideas which he forms and formulates with lightning speed and inexhaustible fertility, and often without an effort, are invariably absent from the world of matter and sense.

The triumph of the Idea over the matter in which it was cradled can be studied in a variety of daily experiences. The eye of the observer stationed on a long stretch of railroad, sees convergence in the parallel lines of rails; the mind while admitting the optical necessity of this phenomenon, knows that the rails are at every point equally far apart, that they neither meet nor tend to meet.[1] It has grasped the *idea* of parallel-

[1] The mistake of John Stuart Mill on this point is now very generally recognised and even ridiculed.

ism, and has travelled a long way in idealism since the eyes first rested on two parallel lines. Again, in a badly drawn diagram, where the radii of a circle are anything but equal, the geometrical student pursues the protracted course of his reasoning, undisturbed by the glaring inequality revealed by the compass, discards all the defects of the draughtsman, and finally arrives at the ideally perfect conclusion that the angle ABC = the angle DEF, which is obviously not the case on paper. His mind is soaring high above the figure, though all the concepts it is manipulating and combining, came in the first instance from the drawn symbols seen long ago.

The process started by matter ends in the spurning of matter under the springy foot of mind.

VI. Inerrancy of Reason

The phrase "Inerrancy of Reason" may be at once irritating and mirth-provoking. Anyhow, it sometimes causes a look of disgust and sometimes a giggle. The human mind, groping after the shadow of truth, or, worse still, running amok of truth, is hardly a fit subject for truth to abide in. It is not always doing as you say, reply the scholastics, and it is gross exaggeration to say that it is. There are two noble definitions of Aristotle which of themselves would seem to

disprove the statement that the chief function of reason is to go wrong: (1) Man is a rational animal; (2) Truth is an equation between the subject knowing and the object known. Against this latter, all the forces of Kant and the German metaphysicians are engaged in a truceless war, but the definition stands unshaken. Certitude is attainable, and we are as conscious at times that we have it as that we are possessed of free will.

Let us return to the so-called simple, but really amazing, process of the immediate mental apprehension of the generic nature of a material object. In this the human mind is inerrant. The simplest case of simple apprehension is perhaps found in the experience of seeing an undefined object moving in the dark. It may be inanimate, or a man or a beast. On this we pronounce no judgment, and if we did we should probably be in error. All we say of it is that it is "a moving thing." The insignificant-looking word "thing," as has been noted, implies the widest possible generalisation: it is the embodiment of the most transcendental of all concepts, that of Being, and is always a standing witness to the existence and action of mind. Of this and this only we are certain—that there is before us a moving *thing*. Here, if ever, the truth has been taken in, and vague though the object of thought is, the truth has been apprehended in such perfection that a true equation

of cognition has been established between the cognising subject and the object cognised. We are certain that there is a moving thing under our eyes, and that we have mentally grasped it and annexed it, and this without the least possibility of doubt. What is true of the senses is true of the mind. The mind is inerrant in the act of simple apprehension of a material thing. Challenge this conclusion and the way is opened wide for the introduction of a scepticism which would make a clean sweep of the possibility of knowledge. If this inerrancy in the primary action of the mind is denied, it would follow that no judgment pronounced by the same faculty can be trusted, not even the judgments embodied in the axioms of Euclid. "The whole is greater than the part." That is a judgment, and is universally regarded, except by the out-and-out sceptic, as an infallible one; but it is worthless unless the simple apprehension of the subject and predicate of the proposition has been infallible too.

As to these judgments, the number of which I fear is often understated, little need be said. They are to be found most thickly clustered in pure mathematics, and constitute a class of propositions which carry on their face the unquestioned and unquestionable evidence of their truth. Of these, in turn, it must be said that unless they are known at a glance of reason to be infallible, no mathe-

matical reasoning based on them has the slightest claim to validity. To assume them is unreasonable, for assumptions are made in the twilight, and these propositions in the lustre of reason. Nor can any man prove such a statement as that two parallel lines indefinitely produced will never meet. It is one of the *principia per se nota*, the fundamental propositions known through themselves and not through antecedents; and to try to go below any one of them would be the same as to try to descend a lower rung than the lowest rung of a ladder. One cannot get under truths which have no under-side, so deep are they embedded in the roots of rational nature.

Not only in the region of mathematics are these inerrant judgments found. Science is full of them, and without them she cannot teach or even live. As a scientist, you are sure you have got at the essentially carbonic nature of a piece of coal. You know nothing, we will suppose, about the extent of the coalfields that nature has laid out. For all you know, they may yield only ounces or billions of tons; yet you are certain, that whatever the output is, be it as small as radium or as large as water, all the specimens, if they be really coal, will have carbon as a main constituent. What makes you so confident? The confidence is not based on any assumption about the "uniformity of nature." You have explored only an infinitesimal

portion of nature, and an assumption of the kind, like the Kantian assumption of the reality of the external world, is anathema to reason, which loves the light and shuns the darkness. Examine your own consciousness and you will find that you are sure of all coal in nature, because you are sure of the correctness of your universal concept of coal, derived from the examination of this single sample in your laboratory. If you deny your certitude here, you have no right to generalise about what you have not seen or analysed, that is, you must hold your peace, resign your chair of chemistry, and give no more scientific lectures on coal or carbon.

Better for you and better for your classes to maintain with Rationalism that on a vast number of scientific problems the judgment of men of science is simply inerrant. That on a vaster number they go wrong I do not deny, but sooner or later they will be found out, and the finder-out will again be human reason, and human reason again inerrant.

Passing from this department of rational judgments, we are not to assume that the next step forward will land us in the boundless field occupied by the mental freaks and vagaries, blindnesses and blunders of the human mind. If the easy work of the simple apprehension of a moving object of sense is infallibly done, and if the more complex process of formulating the judgments of the

mathematician and the scientist can be infallibly performed, it is likely enough that these latter, when linked logically together, will lead to a whole series of propositions that can be known to be as infallible as the antecedent ones that have occupied and satisfied the mind. Thus we are prompted to extend the area of the inerrancy of reason to an indefinite number of cases of ratiocination. The propositions of geometry supply the aptest illustration. After the long process of reasoning required to establish the truth that the square on the hypotenuse equals the sum of the squares on the other two sides of a right-angled triangle, the mind of the student is convinced that his final conclusion is quite as stable and unassailable and impossible to doubt, as any one of the axioms which were taken up and utilised on his way to the goal.

Thus we find ourselves in a position to sum up our triple division of the infallible operations of human reason.

(1) In the simple apprehension of material objects duly presented by the senses, reason is infallible.

(2) In many judgments, notably those of pure mathematics and applied science, the same claim of reason must be allowed.

(3) In many forms of ratiocination, the same infallibility for the same faculty must be asserted.

This granted, the ground may be said to be cleared for what at first sight will appear an overbold generalisation. It is this:—Reason, *as such*, is always inerrant. The rational man, needless to say, can go wrong both in his judgments and in his ratiocination. He may judge from a rubicund nose that a teetotaller is a hard drinker. He may work out a long-reasoned problem in algebra and find that his solution comes to this impossible equation: $(a + b)(a - b) = a^3 - b^3$. But it is to be observed that it is not his reason that has betrayed him into these mistakes. Something that is more like unreason than reason has insinuated itself into his psychical states, and, without any conscious co-operation on his part, has fallen foul of his reason, warped it, distorted it, stifled or ejected it, with the result that the rational processes he was engaged on are dislocated, enfeebled or destroyed. It is not his reason that has failed; it is the factor of ignorance or inattention or self-confidence or prejudice or passion that has brought about the wreck of what was intended to be a highly rational work. The "intromission," to use a legal phrase, of this foreign factor has rendered the labours of the rational man abortive and his conclusions false. So does it happen with the youthful, or even the mature, arithmetician. The boy knows his arithmetic table and knows it to be infallible, but some disturbing cause like care-

lessness creeps in, or some "brain-storm" of distraction blows, and the answer to the long sum issues in a shape which can only be true if 2 + 2 are 5. The something wrong is not due to the printed tables, but only to the boy's departure from this unerring code of reason.

If reason as such and in its own sphere were liable to error, we may well ask, What is there to put the error right? The only possible answer is "reason." But *ex hypothesi* reason is of itself and at its own work liable to error. How, then, can it undertake to eliminate error? But it can, and it is the only way.

The final conclusion, I own, is startling to modern ears, but it is none the less inevitable, and has been reached by the chief of the schoolmen long ago. No one of the multitudinous errors that find entrance into the mental states and processes of the rational man, can be referred to reason as its source. They come from other causes too numerous to mention here and too deep for me to unearth. Reason as such is inerrant. I may be blind, but I do not see what there is to say against this summing-up.

VII. Reason in Command

Where there are warring interests in a kingdom, the government, if it is to hold its own,

must keep those forces under supervision and control. Of the conflicts between the higher and lower natures in man, I need say nothing, except that we all have the same experience as St Paul and know that the struggle is there, and chronic and truceless.

Of the necessity of preserving order in the midst of a rebellion, in which we well know which is the rightful authority and which the lawless usurper, we are equally well aware, but I am not going to dwell on it, lest I should rise or degenerate into a preacher. No Rationalist, I suppose, can doubt that reason must stick to the helm and weather the storm as best it can, while the wild waves are saying, "Oh, how jolly to be a fool!" Granted that reason has got the headship and is the only faculty at all fitted for high station, it is clear that it must keep its position, and that in two main departments—(1) in abstract thought; (2) in concrete operation.[1] In the first, reason claims to direct all mental processes; in the second, to preside over the whole field of human action, which is in turn subdivided into (*a*) intelligent action on external nature, (*b*) moral action, with all its concomitants.

(1) The rule for this headship in speculative thought may be laid down thus:—Conclusions arrived at in all complex mental processes are then,

[1] *In speculativis; in operabilibus*, in Scholastic Latin.

and then only, fully rational and certainly valid when they are reducible to first principles, which no sane man can deny. Thus the most elaborate investigations of the pure mathematician can be justified to himself, or to others on demand, if he can show that on analysis these conclusions can be brought down to some formula as impregnable as this—two straight lines cannot enclose a space.

(2) (*a*) To test the conclusions arrived at by the practical reason, engaged on intelligent action on matter, the rule is much the same. Such conclusions are good, if, on examination, they are found to be directly or indirectly conformable to some practical principle of mechanico-rational work. Thus a great engineering scheme is shown to be sound when it is analysed into such feasible details as damming a dammable stream, or tunnelling a hill which lends itself to tunnelling.

(2) (*b*) Closely analogous to the above is the rule for testing the conclusions of the practical reason or conscience[1] when the subject-matter is moral action. Thus every form of business transaction which can be shown not to fall within the proscribed area of theft or fraud, and which is therefore proved to be in harmony with an ele-

[1] The labyrinthine difficulties in which modern philosophers have become entangled since they called "Conscience" a "faculty" distinct from reason, and hoisted it into a position above reason, were not known to the ancients.

mentary principle of the natural law, is pronounced by reason to be morally right and just.

The rule is capable of endless extension, not only to personal but to political morality. Thus, if a civil Government proposes a revolution in matters educational, and recommends its new Bill as fair and righteous, it must be able to show that the moral character claimed for the measure is in full accord with such primary principles of morality as that the rights of parents over children have the first claim, and that all alleged rights in conflict with these are grievous wrongs.[1]

It would seem, then, that the headship of reason covers a very wide sphere, within man and outwith, and that this queen has *de jure* a vast host of subjects, though many of these are *de facto* engaged in, or preparing for revolt.

VIII. The Headship of all Headships

The rational survey of things beneath us is good —*Despice!* of things around us is better—*Circum-*

[1] The teaching of the old Rationalism on this point is outspoken and fearless. "Lex humana in tantum habet rationem legis, in quantum est secundum rationem rectam,"—"Human law has in it the true character of law, only in so far as it is conformable to right reason" (St Thomas, *Summa*, 1-2, q. 93, art. 3). Again, "Oportet quod lex sit aliqua ratione regulata; et hoc modo intelligitur quod voluntas principis habet vigorem legis; alioquin voluntas principis magis esset iniquitas quam lex,"—"Law must have for its regulator some character of reason; and in this way is the saying to be understood, that the will of the Governor has the force of law; otherwise the will of the Governor would be tyranny rather than law" (*Ibid.* 1-2, q. 90, art. 1).

spice! of things above us is best—*Suspice!* Artists in colour bewail the fact that to most men who walk this earth, cloudland is an unknown land, because they will not take the trouble to see what a pageant is prepared in the skies for the man with eyes uplifted. The survey of things at our feet is not enough. If too protracted, it may be positively injurious. If there is anything above our heads, it behoves us to look up and see what it is, especially if there is reason to believe that along with the sight destined for our eyes there is a voice from heaven that is meant to reach our ears. Reason knows it is set above something, but knows it not more infallibly than it knows that Someone sits above it. To every man with anything like good will, even though his hearing of her is listless and his service grudging, queen-reason has the same message to deliver. She is where she is by divine appointment, and she is not supreme. Then she points upwards, and though men cannot mistake the gesture, they prefer not to follow it, and their truant eyes go down again.

It is a good thing, as you stand at a level crossing on a railroad, to look both ways, up and down. If you look only down, there may be an express on the other side hurling itself at you with the ferocity of death. There are, it is to be feared, many Rationalists who train themselves systematically never to look above themselves, and

this, they think, is to pay court to reason. They are satisfied when they have heard the very partial message of reason concerning her own headship, that they are on the top—top-dogs, I think, is the slang for them—and that as very much lies within them and beneath them, and nothing at all towers above them, they have nothing to look up at. That is their position, and were it my business to criticise it, I should be compelled to begin a long treatise on Natural Theology and the knowableness of God. There they are, but does reason bid them stay there or go up higher? They say they are high enough on the peak of reason, but it is not the pretty things they say of reason that count; it is what reason bids them do. She cannot acquiesce in her own worship; she rends her garments at the thought, and bids them go to a higher mount and there adore her God and theirs. If they would only hearken to her voice, as they profess to do, they would go. "The knowledge of God," says Bossuet, "is the most certain of all the kinds of knowledge that we have through reasoning."[1] The old Rationalism gave out that it had proved the existence of God from reason. The whole of the then learned world, which had eyes as keen as ours and possibly thoughts far deeper,[2] was satis-

[1] "La connaissance de Dieu est la plus certaine de toutes celles que nous avons par le raisonnement" (*Traité du libre arbitre*, c. iv.).

[2] Cardinal Newman expresses the same opinion far more strongly.

fied on examination that the proofs amounted to demonstrations. In our own day the proofs are said to be no proofs, but the saying is all we can get out of the "Rationalist"; the proofs are not disproved. In other branches of knowledge, as in astronomy, the old "proofs" that the earth was flat or stationary have been manfully tackled and torn to pieces. To the old proofs of the existence of God, drawn from causation, this honour of refutation has not been accorded. They are flouted, not refuted, and the Rationalist who joins in the jeering chorus is really engaged in giving battle to reason, humouring a fashion and endorsing an untruth.

The worst offence you can commit against reason is to discredit and give the lie to its own protestations that it came from God and is under God. The reason which makes us rational men and thus capable of offering these half-reasoned insults to our nature, declares that the autonomy claimed for it is a fiction, and that it will have nothing to do with it.

Of course, if reason be really autonomous, the flag of the old Rationalism must be struck. Then truly is queen-reason supreme, because there is no reasonable God above her. Her being she owes to no one. Her pre-eminence is her own. She is free as the air to say what she lists within herself, and to prescribe what she likes to her subordinates, to

keep them in check if she so desires, or to give them a loose rein. She is equally in possession of Home Rule and Home Misrule, and has no one to thank for the gift. She has never strayed, because she was never tethered; she never rebels, because she was never a subject; she cannot be called unruly or ungoverned, because such terms imply a relation to a ruler or a government, and that is just what a truly autonomous power must repudiate—with as much warmth as the Principal of the University of X., who, on being told by a common constable to move on, remarked that he was the autonomous head of an autonomous institution—"which is all rot," said the officer as he moved him on.

You have heard the declaration of autonomy. I am not going to subject it to analysis, still less to hold it up to scorn, but I ask you, Is this the voice of reason or of unreason? Does the rational being use this language, or the irrational? Does reason know that it is a product of a higher reason, as surely as it knows that a watch is made by a watchmaker,[1] and life comes from life? It is for you as Rationalists to answer the question. And if you reach to a higher reason as the efficient cause of your lower one, you must go on

[1] Paley's old argument about the watch has often been called "childish." It is easy to call it names but hard to refute it. Feeble as it is said to be, it is stronger than the attack on it and still holds the field.

with your inquiry till you touch the Highest Reason, and that is God; and if God has or rather *is* Reason Itself, He is surely at liberty to express His Reason as we do ours in language spoken or written, and to enter into intimate relationship with men through a Man He chooses to send. With all the vigour of reason in you, judge of the Life of this Man, who was wise and not foolish, who was truthful and never lied, who asserted and proved the assertion, that He was sent from God, and was God, and to be obeyed as God.

It looks as if the Rationalist was becoming obedient and submissive. Becoming! He was never anything else. Reason is always obedient to something higher than itself. Only unreason rebels. To wean myself and you from this tempting subject, I turn to the splendours of Ruskin.

"Restraint is always the more honourable. . . . It is restraint which characterises the higher creature and betters the lower creation. From the ministering of the archangel to the labour of the insect, from the poising of a planet to the gravitation of a grain of dust, the power and glory of all creatures and all matter consists in their obedience, not in their freedom. . . . That principle to which policy owes its stability, life its happiness, faith its acceptance, and creation its continuance, is obedience. . . . That is a

treacherous phantom which men call liberty, most treacherous indeed of all phantoms, for the feeblest ray of reason might surely show us that not only its attainment but its being was impossible. . . . If by liberty you mean chastisement of the passions, discipline of the intellect, subjection of the will; if you mean the fear of inflicting, the shame of committing wrong; if you mean respect for all who are in authority, and consideration for all who are in dependence, veneration for the good, mercy to the evil, sympathy with the weak; if you mean watchfulness over all thoughts, temperance in all pleasures, and perseverance in all toils, why do you name this by the same word by which the luxurious mean licence and the reckless mean change, by which the rogue means rapine and the fool equality, by which the proud mean anarchy and the malignant mean violence? Call it by any name rather than this, but its best and truest is Obedience."

A moment ago I referred to the proof given by Christ of His Godhead, and meant, of course, the Resurrection of His dead body. That is challenged, and by Rationalists too.

IX. The Old and the New Rationalism Sub Judice

It were impossible to enter here into the question of the Resurrection, but I cite it as a good illustration of the way in which the true Rationalist is often called on to decide on the rationality or irrationality of opposing arguments. There is one thing he is not allowed to do, and that is, to shirk the responsibility of thinking for himself, or to parry all appeal to his own reason by the cowardly device of declaring that learned men are equally divided on this or that contentious matter —and who is he to decide when doctors disagree?

The little story I append will make my meaning clear, and will also give me an opportunity of *not* supplying you with a solution to a difficulty which you can solve for yourselves.

Some time ago, I was in conversation with an intelligent Lithuanian Jew, and we got on the subject of the Resurrection of our Lord. My friend rose from his chair, opened a drawer, and turning to me, said, "I leave this gold piece here and I close the drawer. In a few hours I return, open the drawer, and lo! the coin is gone. What am I to conclude? This and this only: A thief has been and done it. So was it with the abstraction of the body of your Messiah."

Straightway the words of another Jew, St

Matthew, flashed to my mind. "Say ye, His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we slept . . . and this saying was spread abroad among the Jews and endureth until this day."[1]

Now, it is clear from the whole trend of this lecture, that they cannot both be Rationalists—the man who upholds and the man who denies the Resurrection. Who is to judge between them? You, with your reason; you, as Rationalists. It is for you to say, in all these attacks on Christianity, which is the man who is using his reason and which the man who is unconsciously blindfolding it. And I say it without fear of challenge or contradiction, that there are scores of modern theories against the Resurrection, that are no better or no worse than the chest-of-drawers argument of my Hebrew friend. The evidence is before you—that I take for granted—and you are required, as I was required in that little incident, to keep your reason on the judicial bench, to come to a well-balanced decision, and to establish yourselves, even if you fail to win others, in Rationalism and Truth.

[1] Matt. xxviii. 13, 15.

INDICES

(α) GENERAL INDEX

Abraham, importance of, 121
Abyssinia, Christianity non-progressive in, 52
Achæans, 119; ethic of, 46
Adamic pre-religion, 43
Adonis, 83
Adoptionist heresy, 141
Æschylus and monotheism, 124
Agnosticism (*v.* science, religion): arises from Kant, 196; defined, 217; a creed, 217, 219; a method, 217, 221; contribution to religion, 226; purpose of, a scheme of life, 218, 232
Ahab, a subverter of Jehovah-worship, 122
Akbar of India, 64
Alcott, Bronson, 167
Alexander III.; destroys isolation of the nations, 102, 124
Amenhetep IV. of Egypt, 118
Amitabha, Buddhist deity, 80
Anezeh, Arabian tribe, 118
animism, 70; supreme at dawn of history, 101; origin of, 110; progress of, 112; introduced spiritual view of the universe, 71
Apostles' Creed, qtd., 153
Apuleius, qtd., 102
Aquinas (*v.* Thomas)
Arabia, 115, 118
Aristides, *Apology* of, qtd., 152
Aristotle, 237, 239, 249, 252, 256, 262
Arius and Arianism, 147, 153
Arnold, Matthew, qtd., 174, 244
Ascham, qtd., 40
Asshur, god, 117, 123
Assyria, 117, 123
Astruc, qtd., 58
Aten, god, 118
Athanasius, Creed of, 142
Athens, scepticism at, 39
atonement (*v.* religion, etc.): in savage religion, 81; its importance in religion, 12, 95
Attis, 83
Augustine, qtd., 64, 128, 162, 242, 243, 244, 245
authority: justifiable basis for religion, 37; only logical basis of revelation, 47; used in science, 35
Avila, Juan d', qtd., 165

Babylonia, 80, 117, 119, 124
Bacon, qtd., 34, 40
Bagehot, W., qtd., 110
Baillie, Robert, 240
baptism of Jesus, 139
Barabbas, Frazer on, 84
Barton, G. A., qtd., 115
Bel, god, 117
Bible in modernism, 25
Blatchford, Robert, 242
Bossuet, qtd., 273
Brahma, 52
Britain, ancient, 124
Browning, qtd., 97, 180, 187, 211
Bruce, A. B., qtd., 170, 181
Bryce, James, qtd., 121
Buddha and Buddhism, 52, 68 leading idea of, 73; atheistic 74; compared with Christianity 92

Bull, *Bishop*, qtd., 152
Butler, qtd., 245
Byzantium, Christian, non-progressive, 52

Cæsar, qtd., 81
Caird, Edward, 185, 199; qtd., 200
Calderwood, David, qtd., 158
Calvinism, 144
Carlyle, qtd., 33, 107, 167
Cauchy, 22
Celsus, qtd., 166
Celts, 81, 82
Christ (*v.* Jesus), signification of word, 139
Christianity (*v.* religion, Jesus, etc.): strivings after, 91; is a development, 94; its doctrines found in savage belief, 80-83, 131; not therefore false, 83; have ethical meaning, 86; their likeness to savage beliefs not merely accident, 87; other creeds a preparation for, 87; importance of its coming, 119; came to fulfil, 92, 130; its triumph, 126; must still evolve, 96, 128; universality of, 128; proofs of, 128; finality of, 73; Maurice's view, 52; objections to that view, 53; nobility of, 90; but not supernatural, 132, 133; fundamentals of, 29; can accept no compromise in dogma, 137; contributions of, to knowledge, 230
Cicero, qtd., 182
Clerk Maxwell, 22
Coleridge, 186
comparative hierology, religion (*v.* hierology, religion)
Comte, qtd., 65
Confucius, 69; and Christianity, 93
Constantinople, fall of, 119
corn gods, 80
"Covent Garden" theory, 66
criticism, historical, 201; of the Gospels, 165
Crusades, scepticism in time of, 39
Cynics, 124

David, a Jehovah worshipper, 122
Darwin, rejects divinity of Jesus, 225
deism: attacks priest-religion, 75
Descartes, 190, 191
Didaché, the, 152
Dill, S., qtd., 103, 105, 124, 126
Dionysos, 83
Dods, M., qtd., 104
dogmatism: a failing of the scientist as well as the religionist, 7, 35, 227
Doughty, C. M., qtd., 115
Driver, S. R., qtd., 58
Druids, 125
dualism, and Kant, 195
Dupuis, C., qtd., 106

Ea, god, his characteristics and history, 119, 120; is he Jehovah? 120
Egypt, ancient, 80, 82, 118
Elijah, importance of, 122
Elizabeth, scepticism in reign of, 40
Emerson, qtd., 64
Eridu, 119
ethic: proof of revelation, 46; of Hebrews, etc., 46
ethics: Jesus in, 227
evangelicalism, disregard of law by, 12
evolution, and God of orthodoxy, 44; and Jesus, 14; renders Perfect-Man theory untenable, 179; and revealed religion, 90; unreasonable, of evolutionists, 90

faith opposed to science, 22; in modernism, 26; contribution to knowledge, 28
fatherhood of God, doctrine of, derived from doctrine of the Trinity, 147; Unitarian view of, 148
Fiske, qtd., 220
forgiveness, and science, 12
Fotherby, *Bishop*, qtd., 40
France, wars of religion in, 40
Frazer, J. G., 66; his theory of Jesus, 84

future life: universality of belief in, 95; silence of Jesus on, 95; the theological dogma of, 95

Galileo, case of, 30, 173
Gaul, ancient, 81, 102
Genesis (*v.* O.T. Citations); and revelation, 44; and doctrine of the Trinity, 149
Ghost, Holy, 138, 139
Gibbon, qtd., 103
Gillon, E. C., qtd., 128
Gladstone, W. E., qtd., 46
God (*v.* religion, Jesus, etc.): a God before animism, 70; origin of idea of, 70, 101; how evolved from animism, 71; nature of (*v.* Trinity), 137; all religion a witness to, 88, and preparation for Christianity, 87, 88; union with, end of religion, 77; man's departures from, orthodox view of, 43; unity of, 9; ecclesiastical conception of, 10; in Agnosticism, 218-20, 229; existence of, implied by Rationalism, 274; assailed only by false Rationalism, 274
gods (*v.* Adonis, Attis, Ea, etc.), origin of, 70, 101; corn-gods, 80; national gods, 101
Goethe, 186, 193
Gospels (*v.* Jesus), credibility of, 161, 204; their portrait of Jesus, 164, 204; spirit of criticism of, 165
Greece, scepticism in, 39
Greek Church, 144
Green, T. H., qtd., 174
Gwatkin, H. M., qtd., 9

Haddon, A. C., qtd., 128
Halévy, F., 119
Hall, H. R., qtd., 119
Haman, Fraser on, 84
Haran, 120
Harnack, 201
Hastings' *Dictionary of the Bible*, qtd., 104, 115, 118, 119
Hegel (*v.* idealism, etc.), 107, 186, 192, 199, 200
Henderson, Alexander, 145
henotheism, 117
Herbert, Lord, of Cherbury, qtd., 40, 42
—— George, qtd., 158
Herder, qtd., 106
Herodotus, 64; qtd., 102
hierology, comparative (*v.* religion); and revelation (*v.* revelation); study of, a cause of scepticism, 41
Hill, *Principal*, qtd., 153
Hindu religion, 52, 53, 80, 82; and Christianity, 92
historic spirit, 190, 194
Homeric Achæans, ethic of, 46
Hommel, F., 119
Hooker, qtd., 40
Hosius of Cordova, 153
Hume's argument on miracles, rejected by Agnosticism, 226
Hutton, qtd., 177
Huxley and Agnosticism, 217, 221, 223, 226

idealism, 185, 186, 195, 199; and Jesus, 185, 202, 214
ideas, origin of, 257; superiority over matter, 260
Ignatius, qtd., 177
immanence, divine, and Hegel, 187, 260
immortality (*v.* future life, religion) in early religions, 82
incarnation: in Polynesian mythology, 80; in Buddhism, 80; in Hinduism, etc., 81
individualism, and the Trinity, 158
investigation of religion, 103
Ionia, scepticism in, 39
Isis, 125

James, *Professor*, qtd., 54, 66
James I., scepticism in reign of, 40
Japp, A. H., qtd., 120
Jastrow, M., 119
Jeannin, qtd., 40
Jehovah (*v.* God, Jesus, etc.): 101; origin of, 120; in Babylonian mythology, 120; his worship, 120; at Sinai, 120; his land, 121; his priests, 121; becomes

God of Jews, 122; struggle for supremacy, 122; transplanted to heaven, 121; becomes God, 123, 124
Jesus, person of, his birth, 210; historicity of, 228; baptism, 239; his teaching on God, 138; on the Trinity, 141; his sinlessness, 165, 168; his uniqueness, 169; absence of national characteristics in, 171; his attitude to his times, 172; his absoluteness, 174, 241; death of, Frazer on, 84; futility of it, 85; resurrection of, challenged by Rationalism, 278, 279
—— not accounted for by Naturalism, 179; not the supreme religious genius, 180; himself miracle, 181, and evolution, 14, 179; divinity of, 161, etc., 208; difficulty of divinity of, 224; historical evidence of little value in, 224; himself the best evidence, 163, 177, 213; contribution to ethics, 227; made religion universal, 94; personality of, 202, 207, 211
—— the evangelic Jesus, 163; limited by the Gospels, 178; Gospel estimate of, 204, differs from ours, 205; and Idealism, 185, 202
—— religion of (*v.* Christianity): originates in Judaism, 104, 125; characteristics of, 125; struggle for existence, 125; incorporates all that is best in other religions, 129; excrescences, etc. of, 130; not a development but ethical at first, 86; spirituality of dogmas of, 86; results, etc. of, 130
Jevons, F. B., qtd., 41, 42
Judaism, 73, 104; Jahve worship in, 122; becomes monolatry, 123; dispersion of, 124; produces religion of Jesus, 125; modern Judaism, 147; its God a barren unity, 147
Julian and Christianity, 126, 130

Kant, 190; introduces transcendentalism, 186, 195; his dualism, 191, 196, 197; his Agnosticism, 196, 198; and Aristotle, 262, 265
kathenotheism, 117, 122
Kelvin, *Lord*, 21, 255
kings, deification of, 80
knowledge, advance of, fatal to religion, 23; Christianity's contribution to, 230; faith's contribution to, 28
Knox, John, 145

La Bruyère, qtd., 40
Lamb, Charles, qtd., 231
Lang, Andrew, qtd., 41, 70, 110
Lao Tsze, 69; and Christianity, 93
La Place, 34
law, need of emphasis on, 12; disregarded by Evangelicalism, 12
Lecky, W. E. H., qtd., 218
Lessing, qtd., 43, 107
Lewes, G. H., qtd., 230
Liberius of Rome, 153
Liouville, qtd., 34
Locke, 190, 191
logos, the, 211, 212
Lucretius, qtd., 110
Lutherans, 144

MacCulloch, J. A., qtd., 41, 117
M'Curdy, J., qtd., 119
Macedonianism, 154
Machen, Arthur, qtd., 66
magic (*v.* religion), 116
Manchester, Chair of Comparative Religion at, 107
Mannhardt, qtd., 66
Margoliouth, D., qtd., 120
Mason, *Canon*, qtd., 146, 157
Maurice, F. D., qtd., 49, 51, 53, 107
Mazzini, qtd., 11
materialism, 253; and rationalism, 253-56; the true, 256
Melkart, 122
Middlemarch, qtd., 76
Mill, J. S., qtd., 260
Millet, François, 187
Milman, H. H., qtd., 103
miracle: demanded by age of Jesus,

206; Jesus *the*, 181; and revelation, 46
Mithra, 103, 124, 126
modernism, 23; destroys religion, 24-26; is irrational, 27, 244
Mohammed, 69
Mohammedanism, 118; its idea, 78; its characteristics, 127, 147; Moslem lands progressive though non-Christian, 52
monodynamism, 9
monolatry, 117, 122
monopersonalism, 141
monotheism, use of, 71, 117, 123, 124; in science and religion, 9
Moors, war with Christian Spain, 39
Mordecai, Frazer on, 84
Morley, *Lord*, qtd., 9
Moses and the Pentateuch, 58
Müller, Max, qtd., 65

Nathanael, his finding of Jesus, 163
naturalism, only refuge for comparative hierologists, 56; its theory of Jesus refuted by evolution, 179
Newman, J. H., qtd., 17, 28, 273
New Theology (*v.* modernism), 23
Nicæa, 144, 145
Nöldeke, Theodor, qtd., 115
Novatian, qtd., 153

Old Testament and doctrine of the Trinity, 149
Origen, qtd., 166
Osiris, 52, 80, 83

Paley, qtd., 275
Parsees, 46, 82
Pasteur, 22
Paton, L. B., qtd., 118
Paul (*v.* N.T. Citations): a comparative religionist, 64, 104; nationality always betrays itself in, 171; his philosophy of Jesus, 210, 212
Paul of Samosata, 183; persecution: marks triumph of Christianity, 104
Peripatetics, 237, 240, 250
Persia, 39, 124
Persiphone, 83
Peru, 80
Petrie, W. M. Flinders, qtd., 118
Petronius, qtd., 111
Pfleiderer, O., qtd., 171
philosophy, importance of, 188; necessary to science, 188; denies the Unknowable, 189, 219
Picard, B., qtd., 106
Pinsero, *Professor*, his theory of snake religion, 68
Pius X. and the Encyclical, 27
Plato, qtd., 256; and monotheism, 124; and Jesus, 173, 176
Plutarch, qtd., 103
Polybius, qtd., 105
Polynesia, 80
Pope, Alexander, qtd., 247
priest (*v.* religion, Jesus), hatred of, 74, 106
prophecy, as proof of revelation, rejected, 45
proselytism, 103
provincialism in theology, 10

Ramsay, W. M., qtd., 104
rationalism, has no plural, 238; the true, its history, 239, etc.; or foolishness, no *tertium quid*, 240; its character, 243; an ally of religion, 243; necessity of, 245; headship of, 248, 268, 270; and materialism, 270; acknowledges God as head, 273; the old rationalism (*v.* Aristotle, etc.) and the new, 277
reason (*v.* rationalism): inerrant, 249; proofs of this, 251, 261-63; but corrupted, 267; its supremacy, 268; but subject to God, 276; implies obedience to something higher, 276
Reformation, the, factor in syncretism, 130
religion, religion of Jesus (*v.* Jesus)
—— history of, 68 *et seq.*, 108 *et seq.*; importance of Semites in, 115; importance of Judaism in, 124; importance of Rome in, 124

religion, a universal phenomenon, 67, 109; extends to animals, 68; a continual progress, 6, 68, 78, 97, 109; an inheritance, 108; modified by experience, 108; caused by fear and desire for union with deity, 111; rites in, 113; the priest in, 76, 106, 113; hostility of deism to priest religion, 75; element of terror in, 76, 77; levels of, 128; different religions, problem of, in, 102; a factor of civilisation, 127; Christianity the supreme, 128; collective religion, 55; revealed, (*v.* revelation); should be spiritual, 107; as real a field of study as science, 4, 5; not a completed thing, 6; debt of, to science, 8; debt of, to Agnosticism, 227; is allied with Rationalism, 243; has different data from science, 4, 15; necessary to scientist, 15; not opposed to science, 21, but to scientific theories, 32; nor to advance of knowledge, 23; fundamental facts of, 28; as conceived by Modernism, 24-26

—— comparative, study of, 41; origin of, 41-44, 63-70, 102-108; assistance of research, etc., to, 107; widespread, 108; importance of, 68, 70; shows the preparation of Christianity, 87; sets foundations of Christianity firmer, 94-96; fatal to supernaturalism, 56, 57

Renan, qtd., 166, 171

resurrection, 82; in early religion, 82; and the rebirth in spring, 83

resurrection of Jesus (*v.* Jesus)

retribution, importance of, in science and religion, 12

revelation, 138; at variance with science, 22; defined, 90; comparative religion and, 90; theories of, 42, 47, routed by comparative theology, 43, 44; narrowness of, 44; has no authority except the person who receives it, 45; claim to universality, 45; arguments for, 45; difficulties of, 48; test of religious experience not conclusive, 54; doctrine of, demolished by its adherents, 58

Ritschl, 201

Romanes, G. J., qtd., 172, 181, 225

Rome, destroys isolation of nations, 102, 124

Ross, Alexander, qtd., 105

Rothe, qtd., 177

Rousseau, qtd., 110

Ruskin, qtd., 115, 276

Sabatier, 201

Sabellianism, 141, 147, 153, 154, 155

sanctuaries in religion, 113

Sanday, W., qtd., 58

Sayce, A. H., qtd., 115

Scandinavia, idea of religion of, 93

scepticism, fostered by research into other religions, 39, 40; by religious wars, 40

Schiller, qtd., 247

Schmiedel, *Professor*, qtd., 161

science, relation to religion, 3-17; hostility to religion, 6, 21; its use in religion, 8; its debt to religion, 15; and religion in Modernism, 24; has no real opposition to religion, 27; mysteries in, 29; divisions in, 30; has "theories," 31; necessary to philosophy, 188; and Agnosticism, 223

Scott, *Sir* G., 248

—— *Sir* Walter, 193

Semites, religion of, 115; characteristics of, 116; exodus of, 118

separateness of Jews, 46; in revelation, 45

Shakspere, qtd., 220

Shammai, Arabian clan, 118

Shelley, qtd., 74

Simon, *Father*, qtd., 58

Simson, John, *Professor*, 145

sin, belief in, and religion, 85

Sin: god, 119

Sinai, and Jehovah, 120

Smith, G. A., qtd., 118, 149
—— W. R., qtd., 115
Spencer, B., qtd., 128
Spencer, Herbert, qtd., 65, 113, 201, 217, 219, 221, 222, 230 (*v.* Agnosticism)
—— *Dr* John, 42, 57
Spinoza, 58; qtd., 107
Stevenson, R. L., qtd., 63
Stokes, 22
Sumero-Akkadians, 119
superstition, key to religious thought, 72
syncretism, 102, 126

Tacitus, qtd., 102
Tennyson, qtd., 88, 187
Thammuz, 83
Theology (*v.* religion, etc.): always progressive, 7; not departmental, 10
Theophilus of Antioch, qtd., 153
Thomas Aquinas, a Rationalist, qtd., 237, 239, 242, 243, 256, 271
Tokio, chair of comparative religion at, 107
Toland, 75, 106
Tolstoï, qtd., 164
totemism, 66, 112
transcendentalism (*v.* Kant, etc.), 186
Trinity, 155; persons of, 138-40; in the Church, 141; in the Fathers, 152; in the Athanasian Creed, 142; is doctrine of, scriptural? 148-50; made a stumbling block, 147; error in regard to, 153; purpose of doctrine of, 155; its importance, 145; its prevalence, 144
tritheism, 147, 154
Turner, 187
Tylor, E. B., qtd., 109, 111

union with God end of religion, 77
Unitarianism, 147
unity of God, 9
unity of the race, 11; denied by ecclesiasticism, 11
unity of self, 198
Ur-Kashdim, 120

Virgin birth, 210; in other religions, 80
Vishnu, 80, 86
Volney, qtd., 74
Voltaire, qtd., 106

Waggett, Father, qtd., 16
Wagner, 187
Watts, G. F., 187
Westminster Confession, 145
Whitehouse, O. C., qtd., 104
will to believe, 54
Woden, 125
Wordsworth, qtd., 186, 187, 195

Ya=Jehovah? 120
Yorkshire, Isis-worship in, 125

Zarathushtra, 69
Zidon, Melkart-worship in, 122
Zoroastrianism and Christianity, 93

(β) INDEX OF OLD TESTAMENT PASSAGES CITED

		PAGE
Genesis	i. 26 . .	149, 156
,,	iii. 22 . .	149
,,	xi. 7 . . .	149
,,	xviii. 2, 3, 10 .	149
,,	xxii. 2 . .	121
,,	xlviii. 15, 16 .	149
Exodus	iii. 1 . . .	120
,,	iii. 19 . .	120
,,	iv. 27 . .	120
,,	xviii. 5 . .	120
,,	xxiv. 12 . .	120
,,	xxiv. 15 . .	121

	PAGE
Exodus xxiv. 17	121
Numbers vi. 24-26	149
,, x. 33	120
Deuteronomy vi. 4	140, 150
,, ix. 15	121
,, xxxiii. 2	120
Judges v. 5	120
Ruth i. 6	101
1 Kings xviii. 27	122
2 Kings xviii. 34	123
Nehemiah ix. 13	121
Psalms xxxiii. 6	149
,, xlv.	149
Psalms lxviii. 17	120
,, lxxii.	149
,, cx. 1	149
Proverbs viii.	149
Isaiah vi. 3, 8	149
,, ix.	149
,, ix. 6	205
Jeremiah ii. 10, 11	101
Hosea ii. 19, 20	149
Haggai ii. 7	172
Zechariah vii. 9, 10	149
,, xiii. 7	149

(γ) INDEX OF NEW TESTAMENT PASSAGES CITED

Matthew iii. 16, 17	139
,, v. 17	209, 213
,, x. 37	169
,, x. 44	168
,, xi. 27	139
,, xvi. 15	138
,, xvi. 17	208
,, xvii. 21	170
,, xx. 28	168
,, xxii. 42	138
,, xxv. 31	168
,, xxviii. 13, 15	279
,, xxviii. 19	140
Mark iv. 29	170
,, xii. 29, 30	140, 151
,, xiv. 62	212
Luke xiv. 26	169
,, xxiv. 27	168
John i. 1-3	151
,, i. 14	214
,, i. 18	138
,, i. 31	139
,, i. 34	139
,, i. 49	163
,, iv. 22	141
,, v. 17	150
,, v. 18	150, 169
,, vi. 3	151
,, vi. 63	171
John vii. 27	206
,, viii. 12	231
,, viii. 46	165
,, x. 16	157
,, x. 30	150
,, xiv.-xvi.	139, 150
,, xiv. 6	94, 231
,, xiv. 9, 11	150
,, xvi.	15
,, xvii. 4	165
,, xvii 23	157
Acts v. 3, 4	150
Romans iv. 24, 25	151
,, viii. 2	151
,, viii. 11	151
,, ix. 1-5	171
1 Corinthians iii. 11	145
,, viii. 4, 6	151
,, x. 17	151
,, xv. 3	151
Galatians iii. 8	151
Ephesians iv. 4	157
,, iv. 6	151, 157
Philippians iii. 4-7	171
Colossians i. 16	151
Hebrews i. 2	151
1 Peter ii. 24	151
2 Peter i. 21	151

GLASGOW UNIVERSITY SOCIETY OF ST NINIAN

SYLLABUS 1907-08

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

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Nov. 11th. Father W. J. Crofton, S.J., M.A.
Nov. 14th. Professor J. Y. Simpson, D.Sc.
Nov. 19th. Mr Bolton Smart, Superintendent, Hollesley Bay Labour Colony, Suffolk.
Nov. 21st. Public Discussion.

COMPARATIVE RELIGION

Nov. 25th. Mr J. M. Robertson, M.P., Rationalist Press Association.
Dec. 3rd. Canon J. A. MacCulloch, Portree.
Dec. 6th. Rev. Professor H. M. B. Reid, D.D.
Dec. 10th. Rev. Gordon Clark, Perth.
Dec. 12th. Public Discussion.

CENTRAL TRUTHS OF CHRISTIANITY

Jan. 10th. Rev. Professor Jas. Cooper, D.D., "The Doctrine of the Trinity."
Jan. 14th. Rev. David Smith, M.A., "Divinity of Christ."
Jan. 21st. Rev. Professor James Denney, D.D., "Atonement."
Jan. 28th. Public Discussion.

MODERN AGNOSTICISM

Feb. 6th. Rev. J. Robertson Cameron, M.A.
Feb. 11th. Rev. P. Carnegie Simpson, M.A.
Feb. 18th. Father Power, S.J., B.A.
Feb. 25th. Public Discussion.

W. L. MARSH,
Convener.

GLASGOW UNIVERSITY SOCIETY OF ST NINIAN

SYLLABUS 1908-09

Nov. 3rd. Inaugural Address—Rev. W. Robertson Nicoll, D.D., LL.D., London.

SCIENCE AND RELIGION

Nov. 17th. Rev. W. L. Walker, Shettleston.
Nov. 23rd. Principal A. E. Garvie, D.D., London.
Nov. 30th. Joseph M'Cabe, Esq., London.
Dec. 9th. Professor J. Estlin Carpenter, LL.D., Oxford.
Dec. 11th. Public Discussion.

THE HISTORIC JESUS

Jan. 12th. Canon J. A. MacCulloch, Portree.
Jan. 19th. Professor Sir W. M. Ramsay, LL.D, Aberdeen.
Jan. 29th. Public Discussion.

THE RELIGION OF JESUS

Feb. 3rd. Rev. Father Gerard, S.J., London.
Feb. 8th. Rev. David Smith, D.D., Blairgowrie.
Feb. 16th. Rev. James Moffatt, D.D., Broughty Ferry.
Feb. 26th. Rev. George Milligan, D.D., Caputh.
Mar. 3rd. Rev. J. Warschauer, Ph.D., London.
Mar. 5th. Public Discussion.

R. T. CLARK,
Secretary.

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